

MENSA

BULLETIN



JUNE 1985
No. 287

SILVER
ANNIVERSARY
ISSUE



ISAAC ASIMOV:
*An exclusive
interview*

THE WILDEST
GATHERING
EVER?
*In case you don't
remember it...*

A FLYING LEAP
*With the Skydiving
SIG*

MEDIA AND LAW
*June's Theme
Section*

Auf Wiedersehen

AS my term as Chairman of American Mensa draws to a close, I'd like to offer a few thoughts on where we've been, where we are, and where we may be headed.

I believe that the past two years will, in retrospect, be seen as years of building, or re-building, the systems and input structure which will enable American Mensa to grow to 100,000 by the end of the decade. Among the accomplishments of this administration are:

- The production of a handbook for Gifted Children Program Coordinators and a completely revised handbook for SIG Coordinators.
- The mechanics of the Scholarship Program were revised based on your many constructive suggestions, and three endowed awards are now available under the Program.
- International Mensa's finances have been brought under control, the deficit incurred during the time of the referendum on the Constitution has been eliminated, a separate international office has been established, and the international officers can now concentrate on their *raison d'être*: Development.
- The Board of Trustees of the Mensa Education and Research Foundation has been reorganized to bring in new members who are knowledgeable in areas such as fundraising and who, for the most part, are not also burdened with an AMC office.
- Two studies, with slightly different methodology and focus, are under way to get us the information we need to improve our recruitment and reduce our lapse rate.
- Drawing on feedback from the attendees, the "Leadership Academy" begun at last year's AG has been refined and expanded for the AG this month in Milwaukee.
- And, as mentioned last month, the national office has finally acquired real office premises, which will improve the efficiency of our operation, and are designed to handle our future growth.

If this administration is remembered for anything, I would hope it will be remembered as a time we kept faith with you, the members.

While the past two years have been very busy and demanding, they have also been stimulating. It is difficult to imagine,

without actually serving as Chairman, the variety of communications and the breadth and volume of matters that engage the Chairman's attention. Today, I have a much deeper appreciation for the accomplishments of my predecessors, and sympathy for my successors.

I thank my colleagues on the AMC, the National Representatives, and the Special Appointees for their help, support, and hard work during these two years. The dedication and commitment of these volunteers to the improvement of Mensa too often goes unnoticed and unappreciated. They, in concert with their counterparts at the local level, keep Mensa going.

Among the things that pleased me most is the friendly, cooperative, and results-oriented manner in which the AMC operated this term. Disagreements were few, and those that did arise were on matters of policy or procedure, not over personalities. At the risk of quoting myself, I would again draw the analogy that as Chairman I was but the conductor of the orchestra; the rest of the AMC made the music.

I would also like to thank the staff in the national office for their responsiveness to my special requests and, more importantly, for their continuing fine service to American Mensa. Despite being the target of unwarranted abuse by a few discourteous, ignorant, and malevolent members, the staff deliver a high volume of good work in an efficient and effective manner.

One of the great pleasures of being Chairman is the opportunity to work closely with our Executive Director, Margot Seitelman. Her unceasing efforts to make effective use of our resources, her administrative acumen, the extraordinary amount of her lifetime she gives to the job, and her incredible devotion to Mensa, have earned her the respect and admiration of nearly all with whom she works. There are, however, a few members with access to local newsletters who seem to like to rant about how Margot runs Mensa. Well, it just ain't so. Margot does run the office, make no mistake about that, but policy is determined by your elected and appointed representatives on the American Mensa Committee. If it appears that Margot sometimes has a voice in setting policy, that perception is correct. By her performance she has earned it, and any AMC that did not listen to her and take account of her knowledge and experience would be foolish.

Not all aspects of the Chairmanship were a joy, of course. A few, very few, mem-

bers have convinced themselves that Mensa is rife with problems and that they have the solutions to all of these alleged problems. Unfortunately, this self-appointed cadre of saviors also seems predisposed to try to undermine and destroy what exists before they concern themselves with building a better management structure and developing better programs. Dealing with them and their misrepresentations and demands requires an inordinate amount of your officers' and the staff's time — time which could have been directed to more productive uses. So, to the 50,000+ members who are polite, considerate, and responsible, my heartfelt thanks for your positive attitudes and efforts. You help make it possible to keep the tiny minority of malcontents in perspective.

As to the future, there is no shortage of critical matters for the next AMC to address. We must develop procedures at the local level which will keep in the fold the members we now have. It simply does not make sense to spend the better part of the membership year recruiting replacements for the members who have lapsed. We need to develop better training programs for local leaders. As the average group size increases, management by happenstance becomes less and less tolerable. We need to develop stronger intellectual programs at the local level to serve those members who joined Mensa for something more than the social activities. We need a steady increase in our membership to offset the inexorable increase in the costs of doing business. All of these things we can do — if you will help. Mensa remains, above all, a volunteer organization.

About 11 AM on Sunday, June 23rd, my term as Chairman will end, as have the terms of my seven predecessors. Like each of them, no doubt, I shall miss the challenge which accompanies the great variety of assignments one undertakes while doing this almost-full-time job. But, I also enjoy the practice of law and a full night's sleep, so it will be a relief to again have some time for myself and to work full time with my firm.

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to serve as your Chairman, and I am deeply grateful for the confidence you have shown in me by honoring me with Mensa's highest office.

Auf Wiedersehen.

Henry Schofield Noble
Chairman

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THE THROES OF CHANGE

Personnel, Procedures And Presentation

I FEEL smarter already. In the past few weeks I've doubled my reading speed and multiplied my output of correspondence by a factor approaching infinity. I've become a budding expert on typography and publications design (smallish buds, but they look promising). I've discovered I can survive on half the sleep I'm used to, and that hunger forgets to show up when I'm busy. I've even learned and implemented about a dozen of the latest techniques for managing time and volunteers. Best yet, I've realized that if I don't stretch the truth *too* far, people might believe I really have things under control!

If this sounds like "basic training" for a renaissance man – well, it feels like it, too. There was no need to enroll in a bunch of self-improvement courses; all I had to do was say "yes" when Cynthia Fisher offered me the *Bulletin*!

I think this is going to be a great job, although there have been times I wondered. For instance, when I rented a P.O. box to receive *Bulletin* mail. They gave me a broken one. Oh, it opened and closed without a hitch – even had plenty of room for the volumes of mail I expect to get. But it kept bouncing letters and submissions back to the senders! I've decided it was just very sensitive to the *weight* of my mail; as soon as the sender added a little extra ink to the envelope (saying "Postal Service Error: Address *Correct*."), the box accepted it just fine. . . .

Not everybody had trouble reaching me. Fortune's Slings & Arrows Department was able to locate me with ease. The onslaught of submissions for this issue coincided with the arrival of a killer cold. "Doe probleb," said I, "I'll juld do by edidigg id bed." The waterbed sprang a leak.

Thanks for asking. Things *did* get better. My predecessor, Katherine DeWitt, Jr. – along with Chairman Henry Noble, Publications Officer Cynthia Fisher, and especially our inexhaustible Executive Director, Margot Seitelman – have been tremendously helpful in getting me oriented. Most of our regular columnists are staying on board, lending a welcome touch of continuity in the midst of overwhelming change.

More good news: Some of the finest local editors in Mensa have accepted my draft to become associate editors. Beverly Reams (formerly editor of Oregon Mensa's *OMEN*), Richard Jones of Houston (editor of last year's Owl Award winner, *Informensa*), and Wanda Wolfe (editor of *M-Tides*) in Virginia will represent the West Coast, Central U.S. and East Coast, respectively. With nine regions in American Mensa, the division of labor among these talented volunteers will be roughly along regional lines, with Regions 1-3 in Wanda's domain, Regions 4-6 handled by Richard and Regions 7-9 under Beverly's care.

The main function of these three associate editors will be to recruit outstanding contributors in their geographical areas, and to field ideas for *Bulletin* features about people and events in their "territories." There are many, many talented and intriguing Mensans out there whom our readers should get to know – but we know many of you are a bit shy; so maybe with a little encouragement from these dynamic folks we can get you to share a bit of yourselves with the rest of Mensa. You'll find the address of the associate editor nearest you on page 3.

Another exciting innovation is already largely in place: the electronic submission, editing and typesetting of text. We have a new account on the Delphi computer network (named MBULL, for those of you who'd like to send electronic mail to us). Many of our regular contributors and editors will be sending their material to me on Delphi (along with a "hard copy" via USPS) – and typed submissions will be re-keyed by a growing team of local volunteers. I can then retrieve and edit the text, imbedding the necessary typesetting codes – and then send the works over the phone to our typesetter.

This system, although very time-consuming to set up, will offer us greater accuracy, less turnaround time and reduced typesetting expenses – within just a few months, we hope! **IMPORTANT:** Contributors who *can* send their offerings in this manner should first send a printed copy by mail; once accepted, articles can be uploaded to Delphi.

The visual presentation of the *Bulletin*, you have probably noticed, has changed a bit – and it's sure to change even more. I'm considering this format a provisional one, and expect to consult with our newly-elected officers in finalizing the design. Your comments (brief, please, for tabulation's sake) at this stage would be helpful; we want this to be a publication you can share with pride.

I've talked to a lot of people about what kind of publication the *Bulletin* should be. The concept that has emerged is this: A journal that explores the wide variety of interests, attitudes and personalities within Mensa and contains features that are somehow uniquely Mensan. To offer material easily obtained in other publications would be to depart from our goal: giving our members something special for their money. You'll see some examples of this approach in this issue, notably the interview with Isaac Asimov – the first in what we hope will be a long series of fascinating profiles.

Mensans have an (a heightened?) interest in the same new trends, developments and speculations in the sciences, the arts, philosophy, etc. as are regularly explored in the various specialty magazines. We also seem to have a greater variety of interests than most. Doesn't that indicate a uniquely Mensan approach to "popular" topics – examination and extrapolation of the relationships among traditionally separate disciplines:

How is technology influencing art? What aspects of the experimental sciences are being adopted by the social sciences? How can mankind, evolving on a scale measured in millions of years, cope with accelerating change in his self-created environment – formerly measured in centuries, now measured in decades, soon to be measured in months? What are the worldwide political implications of expanding individual affluence, interwoven economies, homogenized cultures...? You get the picture.

Whatever our goal for the *Bulletin*, we depend on your contributions. Send me something so good I can't resist it!

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The **Mensa Bulletin** is a forum for the exchange of comments on published articles, letters or issues of the day. Some of the ideas expressed may be out of the mainstream and some may, at times, be offensive to some readers. Publication of any letter does NOT suggest endorsement by American Mensa, Ltd. or the editorial staff of the **Mensa Bulletin**. Due to space limitations, letters submitted for publication should be no longer than 250 words. All contributions are subject to editing, and we reserve the right to select submissions for publication. Selection of letters is biased to letter-provoking ideas, concise presentation, representative rebuttals, and humor.

On Sir Clive Sinclair's Assertion

On Sir Clive Sinclair's assertion (March) that intelligent machines could eventually be considered a form of life:

We, as humans, are often so impressed with our own intelligence that we confuse the idea of intelligence with the idea of life. Machine intelligence is not more reflective of life than is any other machine attribute. What we are witnessing is the personification, by our ego, of a particular physical attribute of the machine. I suspect that if one asked a cheetah about machine life, the cheetah, could it reply, might assert that the highly developed race car was closest to being alive. This seems absurd but as we like brains, cheetahs like speed.

I sometimes think that if modern society had a little more regard for life and a little less for personal and/or mechanical intelligence, then perhaps we, as living "intelligent" beings, would not have brought so much true life to the brink of destruction.

Alan Bernstein
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Reduction in Federal Student Loans

The Secretary of Education recently justified reductions in federal student loans because "tightening the belt can have the function of concentrating the mind." One of my professors commented, "If this were true, *Mensa* would have more anorexics." I agree.

I used to work 20 hours a week at UPS as a package unloader. I got poor grades. Worse, I didn't do good schoolwork. I fell asleep in class and I didn't have time to read outside my required

course reading (which, to me, transforms schooling into an education). I'm fortunate to have parents who can pay for my education in full. Now I study 30 to 35 hours and attend 10 hours of classes per week. Studying becomes a luxury instead of a necessity when a student has to work off-campus to stay in school.

Steve Conger
3851 NW 97th Av
Hollywood, FL 33024

Comments on Mensa

While I recently renewed my membership in Mensa, I have to confess I'm frequently appalled by the arrogance of certain people who feel their IQ scores entitle them to all kinds of special privileges and positions in society.

They should first be reminded that IQ tests don't necessarily measure the entire spectrum of intelligent behavior. Instead, they measure what scientists "currently" know about what is described as intelligence. IQ tests cannot predict who will make a significant contribution, who has talent or wisdom, or any of a host of other traits our society finds desirable. So what do these tests measure? They measure how well you do on these kinds of tests.

Some readers also seem to assume that a high IQ justifies boorish behavior – because we're all geniuses. Boorishness, however, is more often the result of emotional immaturity.

The truth is, the world is full of people who believe they should get more than anyone else because they are more beautiful, smarter, richer, taller, more talented, etc., than other people. In the long run, it isn't what you've got but how you use it that counts. I'd like to see less self-congratulating on the part of Mensans and more effort put on using what they do have going for them to work.

Dawn Hodson
3321 Preble St
Ventura, CA 93003

Lawyer's Paradox

It doesn't quite seem "fair" to have published the "Lawyer's Paradox" (March) without the solution, but perhaps you were intending to print the answer in a later issue, to give Mensans a bit of fun figuring it out.

The fallacy is that both Protagoras and Euathlus tried to go by the court decision if it were in their favor, and to ignore the court decision and go by their original contract if the verdict were against them. The solution is that once a private contract is submitted to a court for an arbitration, the arbitration is final and binding.

The court would almost certainly find for Protagoras, as Euathlus did agree to pay him for services rendered; in that case, the original contract would automatically be interdicted. Euathlus' attempts to avoid payment would probably be seen as a subterfuge on a par with those of the

19th Century attorney named Scheuster (corrupted into "shyster").

Wilburt J. Richter
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Reply to John Kent

I concur with John Kent (March) that what we all need is to learn effective means to put our talents to work without alienating others. While this hasn't been a social problem for me, it has been a business problem. Presumably in business situations there's enough at stake to focus on task to the exclusion of process, while in social situations enough focus on process exists to "gloss over," "go-along/get-along" and avoid hurt feelings.

I've been working on this with some success for the last four years but I feel like I'm re-inventing the wheel.

Has anybody out there done or read a study on the dynamics of interpersonal relations between gifted and normal adults?

Drury A. Fisher, III
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"Mindless" News

Lincoln Opper's suggestion (March) that we all lie to pollsters is not original thought, as any reader of Mike Royko knows; but I have no quarrel with it. Most Americans are so pathetically uninformed on American politics that their opinions are of little interest.

Mr. Opper's statement that television fare requires no thought leaves me a bit miffed. As a working television journalist, I work very hard to present my stories in a concise and understandable manner, and I do not appreciate having them dismissed so completely out-of-hand. "Mindless" does not seem applicable to the *MacNeil-Lehrer Report*, *This Week with David Brinkley*, or *60 Minutes*, to cite a few. Surely he can find something provocative in some network news documentary, or some PBS programs. The continued trend among some media-watchers of lumping television news in the same boat with *Three's Company* and the *Dukes of Hazzard* is becoming irritating to me. I wish they would begin criticizing programming more specifically, not *in toto*.

Karl L. Streips
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Zero fat weight tables

With regards to Jerome Mendel's letter (Jan/Feb): He is right that "all weight tables ... are a joke," his included. I agree that ideal weight is close to "zero fat weight" – that is the purpose of regular exercise. But, regardless of the amount of muscle developed to replace fat, very few

women with a small bone structure would want to weigh that much more than a man of the same height, the female curse of a higher percentage of body fat notwithstanding. I am 5'3" and am currently on a strict diet and exercise program to get back to my ideal weight – the weight at which my clothes look nice and my bottom doesn't look disproportionately large compared to my upper half. That weight happens to be 100, or, at the most, 105! The best guide to when a person is overweight, in my experience, is when (s)he is dissatisfied with his/her appearance and cannot perform rudimentary physical exercises associated with physical fitness.

Linda Elaine Miller
110 E. 16th Av. Apt. A
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I suspect that Mensans do no better than anyone else when it comes to losing weight. There are literally hundreds of fad diets on the market, and pills and potions which promise dramatic results (VISA/MasterCard accepted). In the long run, fad diets do not work and can be very dangerous. The only sensible method for weight loss is one that offers permanent results. Eating sensibly and participating in a moderate exercise program will allow an individual to lose gradually while gaining health. This is not a short-term solution . . . it needs to become a way of life.

I prefer running due to the ease of its demands – one can run in rain or shine, night or day, anytime, anywhere. Bicycling and swimming are also excellent if one has access to safe riding areas or a pool. Any exercise which raises one's heartbeat to an aerobic level and maintains it there for 15 to 30 minutes is appropriate. Aerobic exercise such as this should be done two to three times a week. Start out in moderation and stick with it. Try it for six months . . . if you don't feel better, look better, and have an improved outlook on life, I'll double your money back!

Mark Nash
205 Northwoods Dr
Fort Valley, GA 31030

Cowboy, Connoisseur

When the **Bulletin** comes I sit right down with all the letters because many of them are hilarious without meaning to be so. How about the man who signed himself with the title of "Distinguished Professor of Statistics?" How often do you guess that the IRS audits his figures? Then there is that nice letter from Texas that said Aberdeen-Angus beef critters kick because they don't have horns! Humbug and buffalo chips! They kick because they come from cold, damp, watered-down-sunlight Scotland and what do they find in Texas? No shade, no rain, no damp cool grass and nothing but dusty sunshine heating up their black hides. I mean, that is like living under a black tarpaper roof in Texas and that is why Scots cattle kick at the nearest Texan. In an effort to find cattle

that could live on practically nothing and stand all the heat and bugs that surfeit Texas, Brahma cattle from India were brought to Texas. Those are the droop-eared beasts that roam about the sidewalks in India and are otherwise known as the original Sacred Cows. But Texans never really learn how to pronounce anything properly, so in one part of Texas the cattle are called Braymers, three counties over they are called Brimmers, and so forth.

Kenneth O'Meara
512 Grafscap Rd
Holland, MI 49423

I am writing as a member of another 2% minority – those of us who produce food for the rest of the population. A letter in March implies that, if "two dollars is lost when a steer urinates," then "supermarkets sell beef bloated by urine." It's as though a steer was like a 1000-pound watermelon from which a couple of pounds of juice might leak! Cattle, of course, have a digestive system and urinary system separate from the muscle tissue and fat of the body.

There are three phases of beef production. The cow-calf operator raises calves to weaning age, selling them at about 500 pounds to a stocker who runs them on rangeland or harvested fields until they reach about 750 pounds, when they are sold to a feedlot where they receive a concentrated grain ration to fatten up to slaughter weight of about 1100 pounds. At each stage the cattle are sold by live weight – hence, if the cows are chased hard or handled roughly when being loaded, the weight loss due to urination and defecation results in a direct money loss to the seller.

D. Alan Thompson
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Paicines, CA 95043

Taxing Matters

The problem with all of the flat tax proposals so far has been they require us to scrap our entire tax system and start a new game, with no guarantee that it will be any better. Mark Skousen has suggested a way we could try a flat tax without starting from scratch. He suggests the following amendment to the law: "Taxpayers who file a 1040A or 1040EZ short form are only required to pay a maximum of 20% on taxable income."

You would have the choice of filing a short form and foregoing all deductions or claiming deductions and shelters but being subject to higher taxes.

As he points out, this is politically feasible because it does not eliminate any of the deductions in the Code. It will be hard for the special interest groups to argue against it, even though the tax shelter industry opposes the lowering of tax rates because many of their "deals" do not make sense in lower tax brackets. As a general rule, it is not economical to shelter income that will be taxed at 35% or less.

The maximum tax on long term capital gains is 20% and the alternative minimum tax is 20%. This proposal would give the average citizen the same benefits the wealthy enjoy now.

If this tax system makes sense to you, write your Congressman.

Jack W. Griffith, CPA
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Multiple Vote

Until the recent "one-man-one-vote" Supreme Court decision, the New Hampshire house was elected from areas of equal population. The Senate, however, was elected from areas of equal taxable wealth. We did very well that way, thank you.

Although an occasional speaker may refer to New Jersey's county government as the Board of Frozen Cheeseholders, I believe their proper title is "Board of Chosen Freeholders". This title would indicate that the colonial constitution writers saw some relationship among holding land, paying taxes, and holding office.

In New England, every local office holder must answer to Town Meetings where the voters and taxpayers assemble to hear the reports and decide just how much (and for what) they will "raise and appropriate" for the ensuing year. The system works well because the voters as a group tend to balance out the various self-seeking and giveaway views which are expressed at the meeting.

Thomas L. Arnold, Jr.
10 Milford St
Brookline, NH 03033

Of course we should have multiple voting! In fact, we should limit voting to registered heads of household, with the number of votes based on the property tax. Renters, of course, would get one vote per family.

We should have "Housing Authorities" to allocate housing. By controlling the allocations, the democratically elected members of the Housing Authority could weed out the undesirables among potential voters.

Jobs should go only to the most desirable members of society. It should be explained to employers that giving jobs to undesirables only encourages them to stay in the country, instead of emigrating. We'll need lots of police, perhaps a police reserve, who would be issued arms to keep in their homes. We will need to suspend *habeus corpus*, eliminate juries, and allow only one witness . . . for the state. If we adopt all those measures, we'll have a peaceful, democratic nation . . . just like Northern Ireland.

Vernon Humphrey
167 Glenn Cove
Seaford, VA 23696

Drivers' IQ Test

Mr. Greene's thesis (March) suggesting a causal relationship between auto accidents and low intelligence is amusing, even if unprovable.

We already know that accident "disproportion" lies with the drink-and-drive group and certain of the young whose judgment has not yet developed. Also, largely unaddressed, is the problem of certain American males who establish a love affair with their vehicle, regarding it as far more than a means of transportation. Members of this club tend to express a certain aggression in their driving technique such as may be viewed in the serials of *Hardcastle and McCormick* of television fame. Unlike the drinking driver, no evidence of the problem is ever found in the wreckage created by these infants of all ages.

I think it would be better to explore the relationship between intelligence and the voting franchise or between intelligence and welfare qualifications. Establishing minimum IQ levels in these areas would be far more satisfying, if not rewarding, than worrying about the level of intelligence required to drive safely. Just think where we would be if the truth turned out to be that those of Mensan ilk were causing the majority of accidents!

Frank J. Kocsis
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Honolulu, HI 96825

I have no statistics, but several friends and relatives in the auto insurance business assure me that the best drivers are those of average intellect. It seems that people of below-average intellect are not terribly dangerous, since they either are incapable of driving or require all their concentration focused on the act of driving. On the other hand, the most dangerous drivers seem to be those of above-average intelligence: The routine actions of driving do not provide sufficient mental stimulation for them, so their minds wander.

Susan M. Bingham
P.O. Box 210311
San Francisco, CA 94121

Greater intelligence carries with it greater understanding and the ability to anticipate. An automobile is certainly a complex piece of machinery, and successful operation requires the ability to anticipate. Twenty years in the insurance business, however, have taught me that IQ alone is not predictive of relative risk. I've had plenty of high IQ types I wouldn't insure with a standard market. Conversely, we have a number of average-to-low-average IQ types who are excellent auto insureds. They display caution, a sense of their own limitations, and pride . . . of ownership, in their accomplishments, in their families, in themselves; they display maturity and self esteem.

There are quite a number of things which are experimentally and/or statistically more predictive than IQ. I can virtually guarantee an auto accident within 12 months of a divorce, death of a parent, spouse or child, or bankruptcy. Drivers with 1 ticket will have 1.88 times as many accidents as unticketed drivers; 2-ticket drivers will have 2.12 times the accidents of 1-ticket drivers and 4.2 times the accidents of no-ticket drivers. IQ is only one variable in a constellation we consider.

I would suggest that we are already using IQ testing for driver's licenses. If an individual lacks intelligence to operate the machinery properly in front of a highway patrolman, he flunks the driving test. If an individual lacks the intelligence to read, comprehend and remember the driver's manual, he flunks the written test.

Maybe a more fertile direction for research would be psychological profiling on a large scale, with longitudinal multivariate analysis of every vector we can effectively measure — not just IQ. I know of no one who has done such research, and I've looked pretty hard . . . which is the reason I'm doing it myself. I should be able to give you a better answer in about 10 years.

Drury A. Fisher, III
3940 Park Av
Memphis, TN 38111

The Clint Plan

There is no question that advocates of special education for high-ability students have a long, hard fight on their hands. But advocates do not have to be adversaries to accomplish the task. "The Clint Plan" (March) is the kind of thing that gives advocates a bad name and sets the cause back. I can appreciate the author's anger, but school boards are not likely to listen to someone who calls them jerks — even if they are.

Advocates must be persistent, and at times a bit aggressive, but there is a strong need to "play the game" politically. In Pennsylvania, gifted students have the same right to due process as the other exceptionalities. The important thing is for individual parents to be willing to fight for their kids, and have a due process hearing if that's what it takes to get an appropriate education. Knowing your legal rights and seeing that they are met is far more effective than name-calling and sarcasm.

Vicky Sokoloff
1501 N. 15th St
Reading, PA 19604

I share the frustration with the no-win position of gifted students in a regular classroom, but I take exception to the inference that teachers are the sole cause.

I currently teach in a large school district known in the past for its fine programs for gifted students. One of my sons was identified early and provided with many fine opportunities for personal development.

Today, however, the paperwork and delays caused by new regulations and inadequate funding leave many students waiting a year or more for even a group screening. The latest information indicates that results from private testing by a licensed psychologist will not be accepted as a basis for gifted placement.

After completing requirements for a GATE certificate issued by the school district, I felt my recommendations concerning possibly-gifted students in my regular classroom would receive serious consideration. Not so. These needs are ignored, year after year.

Even though students' test results indicate an excellent track record on my part, I find it cold comfort. A year in the life of a child is a very long time, and we have no right to waste any of it.

I do not use my able children as aides; they deserve better. I have devised, with the cooperation of a bright college-age aide, a program for an hour a day to accommodate and stimulate the abilities and interests of my brighter children. No authorized program is available.

I'm sure there must be others like myself who are doing the most we can for these children while trying in every way open to us to have them placed in a more comfortable environment commensurate with their particular needs.

The final responsibility, however, is the parents'. It is their child; they must demand and get what is best. It is not only their right; it is their duty.

Virginia B. Welch
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San Diego, CA 92116

What inducement is there for a creative, innovative and dedicated person to go into teaching these days? The salary is lousy. The classroom is overcrowded. The teacher is expected to be an accountant, a statistician, a social worker; to teach students good manners, social responsibility, environmental awareness, human sexuality, ethics and academic subjects; to identify abused children, give slow learners a sense of self-worth, stimulate learning among the gifted, and not neglect the average. Given all this, it's inevitable that anyone with ambition, sensitivity and creativity will get out. The profession is left to the mediocre, the masochistic, and those with another source of income. In an educational system built on the premise that there is only one "right way" to teach all children, a system in which the gifted are lumped with the physically impaired, the retarded, and the emotionally disturbed as "exceptional," it's no wonder that teachers feel no compulsion to do anything but the required minimum for the gifted.

I don't mean to malign my own teachers, the majority of whom were dedicated, well-meaning people who were at a loss how to handle me. But throughout most of my schooling I was told that (1) being gifted was a liability unless I used it in socially conforming ways, (2) I couldn't possibly have any learning problems because I

Letters, continued . . .

had a high IQ, and (3) if I had difficulties or failed to get straight A's it was all my own fault for being "lazy." My teachers were only repeating what they'd been taught; they were as much victims of a mediocre educational system as I was.

I fully sympathize with Clint Danbury and the countless others he speaks for. But instead of going for a cheap target — his teachers — I'd suggest that he take a long hard look at the system that produced them. Better yet, he should become a teacher. I did, and it gave me a whole new insight into the problem!

Paula Lozar
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San Jose, CA 95124

Recently at our school board meeting we discussed funding programs for gifted children and mentally and physically impaired children. Only one of the four members present expressed the opinion that we should have more programs for the gifted than the handicapped. We, the majority, thought that the gifted could make it, even without help; handicapped need all the help we can give them. We do not feel that the gifted should be ignored, of course, but at least now we do have some programs for them. When I was growing up in a little town in North Dakota, it was more or less a handicap to be "smarter than the average bear." Boys did not like you; even teachers, with few exceptions, did not want a brilliant or even above-average child in class.

It has been a tremendous learning process for me being on the school board — I was not aware of the many complex problems that must be dealt with, the least of which is irate parents who feel we should fire a teacher or administrator because their child was, in their opinion, discriminated against. We also deal with raising money for special programs, deciding which books should not be in libraries and when raises should be implemented. It is doubly interesting because I work for a union which represents non-certified school employees and as a board member I am on the other side of the fence.

Margaret Wadsworth/Kinney
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Missing Friends?

IF you know former members who have failed to renew their membership, please encourage them to do so now . . . or at any time. We want them — we need them — we'll welcome them back!

DR. ISAAC ASIMOV

The Good Doctor talks about Mensa, Success and the Future

You might call Isaac Asimov a writer, just as you might call the space shuttle an airplane; in either event, you would completely fail to express the marvelous complexity of the subject. Born in the Soviet Union and transplanted to the United States at the age of three, Isaac discovered science fiction when he was eight years old; at 18 he sold his first story.

Now, over 300 books later, Asimov's work is represented under every major division of the Dewey decimal system of library classification. His Ph.D. in chemistry and his professorship in biochemistry tend to be treated as footnotes to his writing career.

Isaac joined Mensa in Boston in 1962 and is currently International Vice President.

On February 27, 1985, Marlene Zimmerman (an officer of Greater New York Mensa for many years and a longtime friend and associate of Asimov's) obtained this interview for the Mensa Bulletin. Marlene is a freelance writer, former managing editor of Wall Street Computer Review and former associate editor at the business newspaper Journal of Commerce. She is now working on a Time-Life series, "Understanding Computers," writing for Sylvia Porter's Personal Finance, and doing science and finance articles for many other magazines.

BULLETIN: This interview is taking place in recognition of American Mensa's Silver Jubilee and to honor you on publication of your 300th book — but that figure is probably out of date by now. . . .

ASIMOV: Well, yes. It stands at 314 now. By the end of the year, if none of the publishers delay things, I should reach 330.

BULLETIN: When you started out — I know you started with short fiction — but when you wrote your first book, did you envision that large a number?

ASIMOV: No, never. My first book was published during 1950, and by the end of the year I had a second book, which was a collection of stories that were already written. I suppose if I thought about it at all, I might

imagine that I could write a book every year. My first book appeared just after I was 30, and by the time I reached my 40th birthday — or a little after — I found I had 40 books. That was when I first started to think, "Hey, I'm turning out a lot of books — more than I expected," and I began to think, "What if I could write 100 books?" Before I was 50 my hundredth book did come out, and here I am at the age of 65 with 314. It wasn't done on purpose; I just enjoyed writing so much I wrote all the time. Publishers were extremely generous to me, and if they didn't have room for a book because they already had too many, some other publisher was willing to do it. My 314 books are divided up among 35 different publishers, but Doubleday is my most important publisher. They have done over 90 of my books. I'm sure, if I live, we'll reach the 100 mark in three or four years.

BULLETIN: What inspires you when you're writing?

ASIMOV: [Much laughter here] I have a friend, a writer, who says every morning he opens up his mail and looks at all the bills and that inspires him. But I must admit that's not true in my case. I just have so much fun writing. I just sit down and it pours out. It's a pleasure.

BULLETIN: Is there anything you haven't written about already that you would like to try?

ASIMOV: I'd like to do a big annotation of the Gilbert and Sullivan plays, for instance. That's been my dream now for something like 10 or 15 years. I can do it, and I can get it published without any trouble. The only thing is the matter of finding time to do it. There are some things that must come first, and for the last few years it's my novels. I more or less eased off on fiction after the 1950s. The '40s and '50s were big years for me in fiction, and the '60s and '70s were big years for me in non-fiction. Then in 1981 I was talked into doing fiction again, and turned out two novels which were bestsellers — literally, they got on the bestseller list. And so now, as far as my publishers are concerned, I'm stuck with doing novels the



rest of my life. I've written a novel, to be published in September, titled *Robots Toward Empire*, a sequel of *Robots of Dawn*, which is my second best seller. And now they've signed me up for two novels, the first of which will be *Foundation and Earth*, which will be a sequel to *Foundation's Edge*. I've started that ... I've got half a page done.

BULLETIN: What about mainstream fiction?

ASIMOV: That I don't think I'm ever going to do, for a number of reasons. I'm not fond of it particularly. I scarcely read it, but more important is that – this may sound silly – I have no experience of life. I've led a very quiet, sheltered, introverted life. Everyone who meets me is sure I am an extrovert, and I am. But only when I'm with other people – and I rarely am. You can't write 314 books and spend a lot of time with other people. So, what with this quiet, inwardly-directed life I have, I know so little about the world out there I don't think I can portray it with sufficient accuracy. The novel would be terrible. Everyone would see I didn't know what I was talking about. That's why I suppose I'm so successful writing my science fiction – because there, societies are entirely imaginary. I make up my own lifestyles, and the people react as they would in those societies. And I get away with it.

BULLETIN: You have such a vast store of knowledge – it's a national treasure. Do you read – and where do you find the time?

ASIMOV: Well, I've got a good memory and I have the ability to file things in my head. I've never made notes for any book, except mental notes. I don't sleep well ... never have ... so I spend waking moments at night thinking about my novels and things will come to me. I just tuck it away in my mind and go to sleep. In the morning I always remember what it is. Drives poor Janet [his wife, also a writer] crazy, because she takes notes.

I read when I can, during meals, in the morning, when I'm in the bathroom, when I'm lying in bed waiting to go to sleep. If I weren't married, I'd probably read during the night, too, if I couldn't sleep. I not only read reference material and scientific magazines, I read the newspaper carefully – *The New York Times*. Also, I have to read a great many science fiction stories because in the last four years or so I've been putting together a lot of anthologies along with a couple of guys who take care of getting permissions, photocopying stories, dickering with publishers. I have to read all those stories and make decisions on which to include. My co-editor says whenever I tell him that the pile of stories is in the bathroom, he knows

that serious work is afoot and that I'm reading it. But it's not easy, and I don't read as much as I would if I were less prolific.

BULLETIN: Do you ever feel that it interferes with your train of thought for your own stories when you read someone else's work?

ASIMOV: I have never observed that anything interferes with my train of thought. I sit there at the typewriter and I answer my own phones. When the mail comes, I interrupt everything and I answer my own letters. If anyone comes to the door, I've got to be there, and if Janet wants me I've got to be there. But through long training, when I go back to my work, whatever the interruption, I continue right where I left off with no hesitation. I put this down to the training I had when I was a kid.

I started writing when I was a teen-ager – even before, come to think of it. I would sit in my parents' house and type. We had a railroad apartment, and the other two kids (and my parents, for that matter) had to go through my room. Nobody said, "Shh! Isaac is typing." When you played the radio, you heard it all through [the house]. ... So I simply learned to write despite distractions, and it has served me well all my life.

I was also brought up in the pulp tradition, which meant that you write an awful lot. Pulp fiction, in those days when I started, was a widespread phenomenon. There were literally scores of magazines on pulp paper in every category: sports, air wars, jungle stories, romances, ranch romances, detective ... all kinds of things. You couldn't think up a combination that there wasn't a magazine devoted to. They appeared monthly, sometimes bimonthly, and a few even appeared weekly. They consumed a great many stories and they paid very little. So the only way a pulp writer could make a living was to write day and night as fast as he could, and with as little revision as possible. Every minute spent on revision was a minute off your earning capacity. Somehow I imbibed this way of writing because I was writing for pulp magazines, too, and it never occurred to me that there was any other way. I would dash off a story as fast as I could type, then make a second copy, cleaning it up as much as possible. One draft and one final copy, and I still do that to this day. I attribute my prolificacy to that – simply because I never learned how to spend time on revising. I make every effort to get it right the first time. As a matter of fact, I think I revise less now than I used to.

What with all this early training ... and

in addition to that, having a very strong power of concentration ... I simply don't worry about interruptions. I hate to spend the time on it, but I don't worry that I'm going to lose my train of thought.

BULLETIN: You're tremendously creative. I wonder if you've thought about the way they measure intelligence. They don't measure creativity. Do you think that's a lack?

ASIMOV: Oh, well, I'm firmly convinced that you don't measure intelligence – that the so-called intelligence tests simply measure the ability of a person to answer intelligence test questions correctly. I have that ability. I do very well on intelligence tests, but I know darned well that in many respects I am extraordinarily stupid, and that's true of everybody. There isn't a person in the world who is so intelligent in some ways, but isn't stupid in some ways. We measure intelligence in just one way: a kind of academic intelligence which correlates well with the marks you get in school – where they expect you to answer questions and to answer them well.

I've always thought that the people who do best in school are the people who combine a good memory with the talent for judging the psychology of a particular teacher (which I was always good at). I always had a pretty good notion of how to phrase my essay answers so that the teacher would think that it was correct. This in itself is a kind of intelligence ... but it's not the *only* kind.

I think a great many people who seem not particularly intelligent by intelligence test standards nevertheless are extremely intelligent in other facets of life. In fact, I know a great many people who undoubtedly would not score as well in these tests as I would, who I consider as somehow having much more brains in daily living than I have. I turn to them for advice – and get good advice, too. Left to myself, I'd mess things up completely. I lack experience in many things.

I think that everybody has a certain amount of creativity. There are some types of creativity that pay off more than others. If you can write terrific music, you can be a moron in all other respects and do very well. If you can sing and gyrate like a rock-and-roll singer, you can be absolutely nothing in other ways and be a millionaire at 22. I, on a much smaller scale, manage to get by because I can write easily and well. Unfortunately for me, what I write doesn't really knock the world for a loop. I make a good

living, but more because I write many books than because I write any blockbusters. Undoubtedly I'd do much better if I wrote one blockbuster a year, every year, like James Michener and Stephen King. But they can do it and I can't, so I don't worry about it.

I look forward to the future in which we don't have non-creative work for humans to do.

Creativity comes in very many ways, too. I think that if the day comes when we really have machines that do all the non-creative work of humanity, we'll stop ruining human brains. I think to spend your whole life doing something which is purely mechanical is stultifying; it's bound to have a bad effect on your brain. If you underuse your brain, you atrophy it. I look forward to the future in which we don't have non-creative work for humans to do, and every human being is educated in the direction of exploring his own natural creativity. I think we will be surprised when we discover that a large percentage of human beings are interestingly and usefully creative.

The analogy is, through all the centuries when humanity was largely illiterate, those few who *were* literate thought of it as a very rare and creative gift they had – of being able to write down a code and interpret a code just by looking at it. It was thought hopeless to expect very many people to be able to do that. But then, with industrialization, when it became necessary for human beings to work with machines and to have to understand complicated directions so that they wouldn't break the machines or damage them, public mass education was instituted in the industrializing nations. It turned out that almost everybody could read quite efficiently. It turned out to be, not a very rare talent, but a very common talent. And that would be the same with creativity.

BULLETIN: This is American Mensa's Silver Jubilee year. What is your fondest memory of Mensa?

ASIMOV: I guess my fondest memory is literally of the people I have met. There have been a number. Pleasant people whom I like, not because they were so brilliant and

intelligent, because I met other people who were probably equally brilliant and intelligent, but with whom I didn't particularly mesh. I think of people like Marvin Grosswirth [a former LocSec of Greater New York Mensa, and past chairman of American Mensa, who passed away in February, 1984], Victor Serebriakoff [International Chairman], Helen Mosley [current LocSec of Greater New York Mensa], Connie Atman [Region 2 Vice Chairman], you, Marlene, and a number of others, some of whom I don't even remember by name, who were pleasant people – people who could tell a joke, people who had good ideas, people who could disagree with you without leaving scars, so to speak. I remember dinners at Margot Seitelman's and things like that. It all comes under the heading of socializing with delightful people, as far as I am concerned; I don't really believe there's such a thing as a person who is objectively delightful or objectively rotten. It's all a matter of meshing; it's the interrelationship of two people.

BULLETIN: When did you first hear about Mensa, and what prompted you to join?

ASIMOV: Back in the very early '60s I met a young woman called Gloria Saltzberg. She was a victim of infantile paralysis; she was in a wheelchair. I was strongly attracted to her because of my admiration for someone with that handicap who managed to be so busy, so cheerful, so totally without self-pity.

She was a member of Mensa. She told me about it and urged me to take the test. I said, "Oh, come on, I think I've proven my intelligence by my life – I don't really have to take a test." She said it was absolutely necessary to take the test. I thought about it and decided that the reason I didn't want to take the test was I was afraid I would fail. I would be utterly humiliated.

I decided not to be a coward about it, so I agreed. I took the test in her apartment, under her supervision. She was very stiff about it, too. I felt like I was back in school. I finally finished it, and of course, I passed. I've been a member ever since, although I must admit, not a very active member. The reason for that is very simple: You can't be a prolific writer and attend very many meetings.

BULLETIN: It sounds as if it was a social reason that you joined – not in any way idealistic.

ASIMOV: You're perfectly right. I did not join because I felt I ought to be part of a community of highly intelligent people, or

that I owed something to the world which could be best expressed if I joined with other highly intelligent people. No, no. I joined entirely because I admired Gloria, and when I attended a meeting as her guest, I enjoyed many of the other people.

There are flaws in a society like Mensa. I found, for instance, that a number of Mensa people were highly challenging. They looked upon a Mensa meeting as a place in which they could sharpen their wits and engage in mental duels; the idea was to defeat someone else. I was a prime target. Obviously, if you could win out over me, you were doing very well – so I was kind of a walking challenge, and I found that difficult to take. I'm not one to take on all comers. I'm perfectly willing to admit that there are people who in one respect or another can show themselves to be more ingenious than I am. That's all right; I don't mind. I'm willing to give in and say, "Yes, you're brighter than I am."

BULLETIN: You've been very successful in whatever you set out to do. Do you think there is a correlation between intelligence and success, or do you think intelligent people have their own definition of success? How do you define success?

ASIMOV: I suppose the proper way of defining success is to live a good life. We live in a society, however, which strongly judges people by their monetary rewards or by the power they gain, and, of course, the two overlap: Powerful people easily get rich and rich people easily get powerful. I'm sure that I would consider myself a success if I somehow organized my life so that I could spend much of it writing books, because I enjoy doing that. If, for some reason, I wrote all the stuff and earned nothing by it, I would be under the compulsion to support myself and my wife and my children, too. I would have to do something else for a living – for instance, be a professor of biochemistry, which I don't like anywhere nearly as much as writing. Then I might become a famous professor of biochemistry – I might, let us say, win a Nobel prize, and I would be forced to consider myself successful in that case because everyone else would assume I was. But in my heart I would feel I was a failure because I wasn't able to spend my life writing. I wouldn't be able to say that very loudly, because people wouldn't understand how I could possibly be so crazy. But of course, since I do get paid for my writing – and very well, too – people accept my being successful as a writer. Not because I enjoy writing, or because I write well, but because I write profitably. It's almost impossible to avoid

following the world in this respect.

BULLETIN: What was the real message – if any – of 1984?

ASIMOV: For me it was a hard year to live through because of the constant references and discussions of Orwell's book, which I happen to dislike intensely. I read it as science fiction – I did not read it as an allegory; I did not read it as a warning against totalitarianism – I read it as science fiction, and it's a lousy science fiction book. I was unable to rid myself of that aspect of it. It just bothered me. I was continually being asked about 1984 ... in fact, I celebrated New Year's Eve primarily because it meant that 1984 was over.

I had major surgery on December 14, 1983 – triple bypass. I expected to survive because they've got that operation down to a science – but there was a perceptible chance that I might not. I consoled myself with the thought that if I didn't survive, at least I wouldn't have to live through 1984. Well I did, and I survived 1984 ... and here it is 1985, and no one wrote a book entitled 1985, and I'm relaxed.

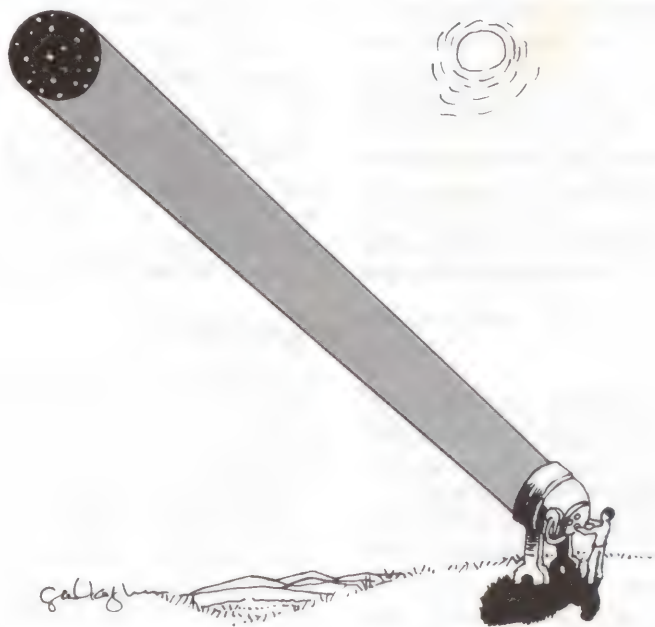
BULLETIN: What is it that you look forward to, either for yourself or the world?

ASIMOV: For myself I don't look forward to anything in particular because I've achieved everything I had a right to expect to achieve. What I would like for myself is to continue to write and to have, when the time comes, a quiet, easy death. I would not like to die in agony.

For the world, generally what I want is survival ... and that's becoming a difficult thing to ask for. I would like to see an end to the arms race, an end to some of the more paranoid mutual hatreds and suspicions of other nations. I want to see that substituted for by international cooperation. I would like to see humanity unite in following some great project with value to all, in which they can feel they are part of a great whole.

In particular, I think that the way to do that is to move into space peacefully; not for the purpose of setting up weapons, but so that we can settle other worlds ... settle space itself. So we can make use of space as a source of energy and material for a new society which can live in space and put its industrial machinery in space, build structures in space that can do what we can't do on earth. And perhaps become so successful [as a society] that we can think of everything up to the year 2000 A.D. as representing its adolescence and final adulthood.

Naturally, since I don't really expect, even with the most favorable developments, to live much past the year 2000, I don't expect to see any of this myself. I would settle if I could see this on the distant horizon. If I can reach the year 2000 and feel that the worst is over, that there is decreasing danger of nuclear conflict and increasing prospects of international cooperation, I can die peaceful and happy.



ONE WORD

Worth a Million?

CREDIT for March solutions is awarded to Bill Wigand, Jack Bard, Bob Hailey*, Mark Evans, David Rothman*, Stephen Bertke, Perr Cardestam, Clyde Dewey, Sharon Pense, Ben Bock, Steve Herrick, Dick Lucht, Bill Ridge, Pam Greene, and John Kirkpatrick. A star indicates a perfect score.

Updating March #3, Bob Hailey has found (in Webster's 2nd) a string of six vowels in *aiaiai*, a roseate spoonbill. The longest string of consonants reported so far (by several readers) is also six, occurring in compound words such as *latchstring* and *catchphrase*.

A number of readers have disputed the answer to December's puzzle #2, the probability question dealing with two children. The problem, with its answer of $1/3$, was taken from a college textbook on probability. It has also appeared in at least one puzzle book with that same answer. However, I now tend to agree with the dissenters (from the published articles I've received, it's evident that many mathematicians are included) that the answer should be $1/2$ for two reasons, one of which has to do with *possibility* vs. *probability*, while the other involves a convincing demonstration that the answer to the problem actually depends upon how you look at it! Unfortunately, that's occasionally the case with probability questions. It's a little disconcerting to find an area of mathematics where subjective interpretation is allowed to play a part; nevertheless, since probability questions make interesting puzzles, you'll continue to see them here, along with answers that are *probably* correct.

April Solutions

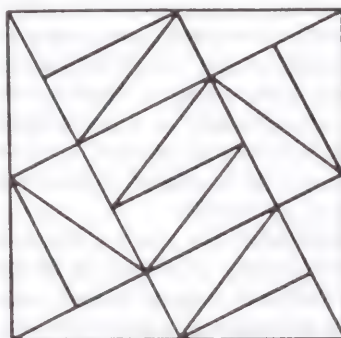
1. Although this problem is solvable with nothing more than basic algebra, writing the algebraic expression can be tricky. The key is in finding a variable which is unaffected by the time element. While the ages of both the monkey and its mother change through time, the *difference* between their ages never does! After expressing the mother's current age in terms of that difference (for more details

send a SASE), we find that the mother is $2\frac{1}{2}$ and the monkey, one year younger, is $1\frac{1}{2}$, so the rope turns out to be 5 feet long.

2. Matt is the doctor.

3. The farmer had 806 trees in 13 rows of 62 or 31 rows of 26.

4. Begin by drawing a line from the midpoint of a side to a corner.



5. Only one such group exists, 1, 2, 3, which yields a sum of 8. Proof: using x as the middle number, form the six fractions from $(x-1)$, x , and $(x+1)$. Adding them gives a total of $6x^2/(x^2-1)$. Since (x^2-1) cannot be a factor of x^2 , it must be a factor of 6, which is possible only when $x = 2$.

6. a) hire or fire b) raze (raise)

I'm sorry to say that for the second month in a row credit must be delayed until next issue. This time, however, it is my fault, as an out-of-town vacation prevented me from reading any mail until well after the deadline.

Puzzles for June

1. Here's something that should please everyone! Whether your favorite type of puzzle involves words, math, or even computers, this problem submitted by Ed Coudal of Park Ridge, Illinois should provide an interesting challenge. He first saw it presented on Chicago's Lake Shore Electronic Bulletin Board System by system operator Patrick Townson.

Assign a numerical value to each letter of the alphabet, from A=1, B=2, C=3,

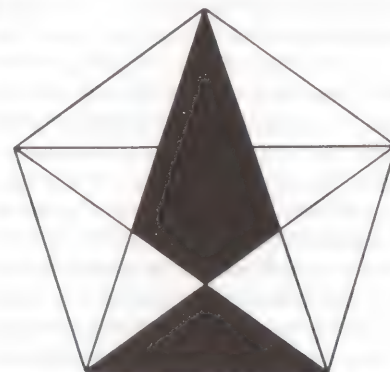
through Z=26. Find the value of different words by multiplying their letter values. For example, *hello* equals $8 \times 5 \times 12 \times 12 \times 15$ or 86,400. Can you find a legitimate English word which equals one million exactly. If not, how close can you come, either more or less? The word *single* computes to 1,005,480, but Ed has done better than that. We don't yet know the best answer, but you have all month to search for it (note the late deadline). Remember that A's are "free," and please avoid contrived words. For unusual words, include a dictionary source.

2. How many different (not matching if superimposed without turning) ways can you connect 8 dots arranged in a regular octagonal array with one continuous line (actually a series of 7 joined line segments) which does not cross itself? For example, there are 8 ways to so connect an array of 4 dots.

3. Pitcher A contains a gallon of water and pitcher B contains a gallon of milk. Remove a cup of water from A and add it to B. Now remove a cup of the mixture from B and add it to A. How does the amount of milk in pitcher A compare to the amount of water in pitcher B – more, less, or the same?

4. Write the digits 1-9 in order. Now insert a minimum number of plus and minus signs so that the resulting expression equals 100.

5. This one comes from John Lew of Ossining, New York. Below is a pentagram inscribed in a regular pentagon. Find the ratio between the shaded areas.



Solution deadline is July 7th. Send all correspondence to the address below.

Phyllis Stewart
1088 Crestwood Lane
Bolingbrook, IL 60439

Competition

THE wordplay competition published in the January/February issue of the *Bulletin* produced yet another onslaught of excellent entries. I have chosen twenty-five winners, but at least another fifty were near-hits (You know who you are!) The format of the competition involved omitting one letter from a familiar phrase, quote or title, then defining the altered item. The winners (in random order) are:

The Andromeda Stain – Chicken Little discovers that the sky only leaks.

Herb Brown, Jr.
Chattanooga, TN

The Taliman – Autobiography of Harry Belafonte.

Hugh G. White
Midland, TX

Marat/Sad – revolutionary discovers that there's no hot water in the bathtub.

James R. Heinrich
Midland, TX

I am not a rook – Nixon explains why he should be king.

Alexander Nussbaum
Queens, NY

E=mc – Proposed *Mensa Bulletin* column: profiles members who almost achieved something.

Sherrill Foote
Marshalltown, IA

Gray Anatomy – The physiological effects of miscegenation.

George Perla
Framingham, MA

Jane Eye – Female private detective uncovers Mr. Rochester's guilty secret.

Lewis Harrison
New York City, NY

Make ROM for Daddy – Danny Thomas gets a home computer for Fathers' Day.

Stephen Welsh
Staten Island, NY

Never Say Never Gain – James Bond battles the diabolical Richard Simmons.

Michael Stern
Sunnyvale, CA

Thee's a Crowd – The story of an overweight Quaker wife.

John Burdick
Salinas, CA

The Three Aces of Eve – Winning hand for a lady with nothing up her sleeve.

Carol Stewart
Pineville, LA

Sic transit gloria mundi – Sam Peckinpah's epitaph.

Ken Johnson
El Toro, CA

The Goodyear Blip – The last thing we see after a gross inflation error with a familiar airship.

D.J. Hance, Jr.
Wake Village, TX

Tits Andronicus – A poor Greek girl rises in the burlesque circuit.

Ted Mead
Port Neches, TX

The Divine Bete Midler – Dr. Jekyll and Ms. Hyde.

Anna F. Jacobs
Tuscaloosa, AL

There's a fly in my sou – Filthy Lucre.

William J. Giovan
Detroit, MI

Beak dancing – New technique to cause chickens to break their own necks.

Debi Beall
Dover, DE

The Number of the Best – Heinlein talks about the top 2%.

Kent Van Cleave
Phoenix, AZ

The Other Earth News – What E.T. phoned home for.

Jane Cassi
Elmira, NY

A*S*H 4077 – Residue from Fahrenheit 451.

Robert K. Johnston
Murray, UT

Stars and Strips Forever – Sousa plays Minsky's.

"Colchester Book Club"
Norwich, CT

The Prince and the Paper – The Magna Carta.

Sally R. Smith
Cincinnati, OH

The Even Against Thebes – The odds against Troy.

E. Jimmee Stein
New York, NY

The Deocratic Party – The Moral Majority.

James Curtis Rothman

Hermosa Beach, CA

Romaning the Stone – Pope John Paul II acquires a widely-read liberal magazine.

Heather Preston
Seattle, WA

THIS month's wordplay competition is somewhat trickier than previous ones. What we're after is a familiar quote, name, or phrase which is altered by taking one (and only one) word of the item and forming an anagram of that word; then give a definition of the altered item. Examples:

The Ogod, the Bad and the Ugly – George Burns discusses his film roles, his singing voice, and his toupee.

Army Had a Little Lamb – Report on meat rations.

Gorky Krap – Russian response to Martin Cruz Smith.

Turner of the Jedi – Atlanta mogul attempts to take over the Empire.

Rented is the Night – Confessions of a call girl.

Dearsir of the Lost Ark – Journal written by Spielberg's secretary.

All the Spitenerd's Men – Unflattering account of Nixon and Watergate.

Rime of the Ancient Marnier – An appreciation of fine old cognac.

Charley's Tuna – Old-fashioned farce from Starkist.

Black Like Em – In which Dorothy reveals that her Auntie was an octoroon.

Your submissions are eagerly awaited. Please send a maximum of five entries (postcard strongly preferred) by July 5th to:

Jean MacKay Jackson
6128 S. 114th E. Av
Broken Arrow, OK 74012

Do Kids Belong in Mensa?

MOST of you are familiar with the benefits Mensa offers adults: the warm and accepting friendships, stimulating conversations, mental exercise and play, the chance to find others with similar hobbies and interests, or a similar sense of humor and world view. For many of us, the actual activities in Mensa are secondary to the intangible social and emotional side effects. It means a great deal to find others with whom we can communicate freely and easily, let down our usual social façade, and stretch our mental muscles – especially when such opportunities are rare in our daily lives, as they are for those who are geographically or physically isolated, like housewives, the self-employed, or those of us working in non-professional or non-traditional occupations. As we make our rounds of parties and RGs, we often take these benefits for granted, yet I believe these side effects are the most valuable part of Mensa.

This is true for gifted kids as well as adults. Gifted kids have the same need to find someone who understands, can empathize because of similar differences, and can reflect and share the enthusiasm and energy invested in a hobby or interest that others consider odd or boring. Gifted children have an intense need for self-expression. They wear out their teachers and parents with their extensive explanations of civil war battles, dinosaur trivia or astronomy. They need to talk about what they are learning, just as I used to bore my co-workers with my attempts to discuss the effects of malaria on the history of the American South. Luckily, gifted kids also have curiosity and a strong need to know, so they will often listen to lectures or conversations that would have another child fidgeting after 30 seconds.

It's often noted that gifted children are more comfortable with adults than with other kids. Parents are sometimes worried by this. We forget that children are more limited in their access to compatible friends. They must choose from their class at school and the kids in the neighborhood. Gifted children seek their intellectual peers just as

adults do. Often we do it unconsciously, without thinking about why a certain person is more comfortable to be with or more fun to be around than another. Teachers notice that the bright kids always seem to find each other, given half a chance.

Gifted kids are also less concerned by age differences than other children. They will play comfortably with kids both younger and older than themselves, without thinking it strange. And they choose different sets of friends for different purposes, playing with one friend for intellectual stimulation and another for emotional or physical reasons. It makes sense to play baseball with the good players, while collecting stamps or rocks with someone else.

Because of this, many gifted children have no trouble enjoying adult company, while still finding enjoyment among age-mates when the talk turns to boys (or girls), clothes or the latest music.

That's why I believe the best thing Mensa has to offer children is the same thing it offers to adults – the chance to meet others of high intelligence. We often say that Mensa is an organization of former gifted children. Our need for association with like minds does not suddenly arise upon graduation from high school. It is an integral part of being highly intelligent, something we were probably born with. It's a need for gifted children as much as for adults – if not more.

If gifted children can form friendships in Mensa with other gifted children somewhat close in age, so much the better. But even the associations between gifted teens and toddlers (for babysitting?) are valuable to both. And when there are no other kids present at a Mensa event, the child will still benefit in several important ways.

As I read more about gifted children, certain themes recur. One is the sense of alienation and isolation that gifted children can feel when they do not have supportive friends or family. Another is the need for encouragement and help with interests or projects out of step with what the schools can provide. Often the presence of one un-

derstanding friend can offset a great deal of discouragement and frustration, and help kids cope better with their problems. Almost without exception, great scientists, inventors, artists and writers can point to some adult whose encouragement made a difference while they were growing up.

Often this person is a teacher, but just as often teachers are recommending to the parents of the highly gifted that they find mentors for their children. The problem is that what makes a mentor genuinely useful is the mutual friendship and respect that arises in the relationship. The mentor chooses to help the child out of interest and caring, and the child responds because he or she wants to please the mentor. That's why a mentor can have such a great influence on a developing child. For this reason, I don't believe a mentor is something that can be assigned or bought. I do believe that association with gifted adults in a group like Mensa during activities of mutual interest can make it possible to find informal role models and mentors through the casual and unstructured conversations that will naturally arise, without any restructuring of the group or formal attempts to match up kids and adults. Given half a chance, the kids will find what they need, and receptive adults will benefit from the chance to help them.

Role models are especially important to gifted children. They are struggling with questions that may not have easily accessible answers. For the gifted teen-age girl who is wondering whether she can be smart and still find a boyfriend, high school experiences may provide the wrong solution. In Mensa, she will see attractive, highly vocal women pursuing professional careers. She will notice that such women hold their own intellectually with the men in the group, without hiding their intelligence, that they are attractive to men without denying their gifts, and that there really is a way to be feminine and smart.

Both boys and girls can be exposed in Mensa to adults pursuing a wide range of career options, subjects of interest, and ways of accommodating the demands of life. They can see that it isn't always necessary to give up music in favor of a steady-paying job, or liberal arts in favor of science, that there are ways of combining multiple talents and interests. They can see that it's perfectly acceptable for a highly intelligent person to be a farmer instead of a doctor, or that being a housewife doesn't preclude having an active and fascinating set of hobbies and a life of the mind. Mensa can provide visible op-

tions to children who have a necessarily limited perspective on life.

Mensa also gives gifted children a chance to talk about things they can't discuss at school, or even at home. Questions like "Is nuclear war imminent or preventable?" or "Does God exist; is religion viable?" or "Is abortion murder?" Gifted children can find sophisticated discussion of questions their classmates are dogmatic about or unwilling to discuss. They can test their ideas and find new points of view at a level and depth impossible at school. They can also be directed to sources of information that will expand their thinking.

Gifted kids, like gifted adults, are often attracted to novel ideas and off-beat theories. Often they come up with their own, unaware of the context of existing thought on a subject. Mensa can help them explore these ideas with a firm grounding in what's flaky and what's real, without the atmosphere of alarm such explorations might provoke at home. If you bring up astrology, Zen, or the paranormal at a Mensa meeting, someone is bound to have covered the same ground before, with all the pros and cons.

Mensa also provides a context for gifted children to view their own gifts. Until I joined Mensa, I thought all intelligent people were like me. I had no idea of the diversity of abilities and multitude of ways one can be highly intelligent. Mensa makes this simple fact very obvious. Gifted kids sometimes have some distorted ideas about their gifts. They may be told they are the next Einstein (or think they ought to be), or the last hope for world peace (and know they can't be). Or they may think they're wiser or better or more important than other people. Sometimes they think they're less important than others, too odd or obnoxious, totally different from everyone else and terribly alone.

Mensa shows kids that they are not alone and that there are many ways to be smart. Mensa shows that high IQ does not make one wise, kind, good, or in any respect the saviour of the world. Mensa also shows that one can be happy, prosperous and sociable – both in spite of and because of one's gifts. No amount of reading can make these facts as real as one single Mensa meeting does.

Then there are all the concrete benefits Mensa offers children. Older kids can participate very well in national SIGs, because they are conducted by mail. These range from postal chess and stamp swapping to Star Trek and absurdities. There is even a

Kid SIG for younger children, ages 4-11. Many groups also run activities especially for children, including picnics, field trips and special programs. Others offer scholarships and contests. Ask your local gifted children coordinator (or LocSec) for a copy of the April issue of *Bright Ideas*, the newsletter for local GC coordinators. It describes the wide variety of activities for gifted children conducted by local groups across the country. I think you'll be surprised by how much we do at the local level. But remember that an activity does not have to be labeled "for children" in order for a child to attend. In my group, kids have participated in our Toastmasters group, the Poker SIG, the photography group, and several of the games groups from time to time.



If there are many benefits to kids in Mensa, there are also some obstacles. The most obvious is transportation. Unless a parent is willing to attend with a child or help him get there, the child is stranded. Parents are also welcome at Mensa events; any member may invite a relative or guest to accompany him. Another obstacle is shyness. Kids are unsure about their first Mensa encounters, just as we adults were. They wonder whether other kids will be there, whether they'll be welcome, whether it will be boring or too far over their heads. One solution is to bring a friend along. Parents, too, must provide some extra encouragement to get kids started. And older members must reach out to kids, just as we reach

out to other new members. It's too easy to make someone feel invisible. Age is no reason to ignore a new member.

Are kids really welcome in Mensa? The answer is a qualified "yes." Obviously, some Mensa activities are designed for adults. Toddlers will be out of place at most RGs, and SEXYG is not really aimed at the younger audience. Mensa cocktail parties and happy hours are often held in "adults only" locations. Some discretion must be exercised by parents. However, many activities are as suitable for children as a family holiday gathering, complete with a range of ages and an occasional "black sheep."

At the same time, Mensans will not censor their language or behavior because children are present, nor will they tolerate disruptive behavior on the part of youngsters. Every member is expected to behave in a socially acceptable manner with consideration for others, and parents are responsible for the behavior of their children. One standard fits all, but it is usually equivalent to what you would encounter visiting family, friends or relatives, or in a PG-rated movie, without the nudity or violence, but with occasional strong language and adult situations.

Occasionally an adult Mensan complains that he or she does not want to spend time with kids, finds them annoying and thinks they should be segregated to functions just for children. The refrain goes "I've raised my kids and don't choose to associate with children now," or "I'm single, and if I wanted to be with kids I'd have my own." Such members forget that the only criterion for Mensa membership is an appropriate test score. There are no age restrictions. This means that if kids or their parents pay dues, they are entitled to all of the rights and privileges of membership, including running for office if they want to. An individual member can always declare his or her home off-limits to children (or smokers, the opposite sex, or any person), but Mensa can no more exclude children as a group than it can exclude any religious, ethnic or racial category from its activities. Mensa, by its charter, is not age-restrictive. Such members also forget that our involvement with gifted children also gives the group a great deal of credibility and useful purpose in the eyes of the world, some redeeming value among our otherwise social functions. Surely this is worth occasional inconvenience. I personally find the company of some adult Mensans much more disagreeable than the company of most gifted children. Yet I will

Gifted Children, continued . . .

endure the company of all comers, or leave if it becomes unbearable, because it is the nature of our group to be accessible to all highly intelligent persons.

Foreign exchange students visiting the U.S. often note and wonder at the age segregation they find in our country. It is common in the rest of the world for youngsters to have adult friends. In Mensa, we have a wonderful way to span generations. Encouraging youngsters in Mensa will also build a foundation for the growth of our organization. Now that American Mensa is 25 years old, we will see, increasingly, second-generation Mensans taking an active role in our society. Already, several local groups have officers who joined Mensa while in their teens. They may become inactive during their college years, but come back at the transition times – moving to a new city, returning to their hometown, or starting a new job – the times when it's nice to have friends and a warm Mensa "family" to return to. Encouraging younger members will ensure a strong future for Mensa. Let's welcome them now when they need us, so they'll be with us later, when we need them.

Nancy Alvarado
5731 Sierra Cielo
Irvine, CA 92715

AG UPDATE #4:

Young Ms

YOUNG Ms, are you wondering what an Annual Gathering has for you? Sometimes it seems as if the adults are having all the fun, while you are stuck in a corner doing nothing. However, the 1985 Silver Anniversary AG, being held in Milwaukee this June, may be just what you are looking for.

Some of the special features of the Anniversary AG include a hospitality suite for young Ms, along with programming and activities sponsored by the Young Ms of Wisconsin. Programming includes an Experimental Aviation Design workshop (flying paper airplanes), a running game of 'TAG', and a comic book workshop to cater to the more offbeat tastes.

If you haven't gone to an AG or RG before because you thought that there wouldn't be anything for someone your age, you are in for a pleasant surprise. Join your friends in Milwaukee for the Silver Anniversary AG.

Rich Lukas and Lucien Van Elsen
1040 S. Hawthorne Ln
Brookfield, WI 53005

SCIENCE FAIR AWARD WINNERS

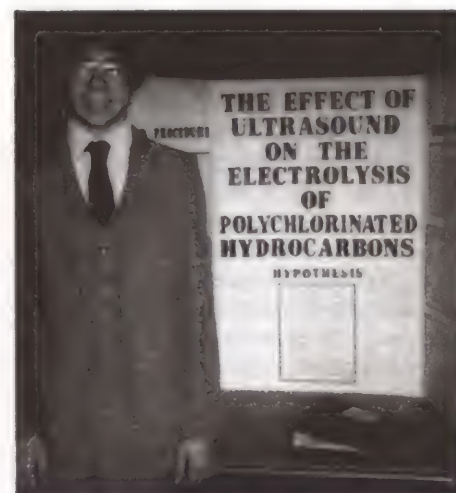
Richard Lukas, 18, and Lucien Van Elsen, 16, both of Brookfield (Wisconsin) Central High School have won top honors in the 31st Southeastern Wisconsin Science and Engineering Fair, held March 27, 1985 at Marquette University in Milwaukee.

Lukas, currently Young M Coordinator for Mensa of Wisconsin, won the first place medal in the Mathematics/Computer classification, Senior division. He also won a four-year full tuition scholarship to Marquette University for most outstanding 12th grade entry. The Association of Computing Machinery awarded Lukas \$200 in cash and a one-year membership in the Association.



Richard Lukas

Lukas' project involved developing a method of drawing three-dimensional figures with a computer so as to create graphics which appear realistic in perspective. Lukas states his project contained four separate major steps: (1) produce a math routine to plot coordinates in a triaxial system; (2) develop formulae to rotate the figures through three dimensions; (3) develop subroutines to maintain perspective; and (4) create a subroutine to eliminate hidden lines and surfaces.



Lucien Van Elsen

Van Elsen, who will become Young M coordinator in June, won the second place medal in the Chemistry classification, Senior division, as well as the first place award from the American Institute of Chemical Engineers – a copy of the *Engineer's Handbook*; the second place award given by the American Chemical Society – a copy of the *Merck Index* and a certificate; a \$75 cash award from the Electrochemical Society, Southern Wisconsin Section; and a \$50 bond from the Acoustical Society of America.

"The Effects of Ultrasound on the Electrolysis of Polychlorinated Hydrocarbons" was the title of Van Elsen's project. His intent was to find a method of safely disposing of polychlorinated hydrocarbons, which include such substances as DDT (dichlorodiphenyl trichloroethane), PVC (polyvinyl chloride) and various PCB's (polychlorinated biphenyls), all of which are toxic and non-biodegradable. Van Elsen concentrated on pentachlorophenol, since he had a good source of supply. A specific frequency of ultrasound was found that increased the rate of electrolysis of pentachlorophenol, thus speeding up its decomposition.

Marcy A. Hotz
9198 N 70th St
Milwaukee, WI 53223

WHAT THE HECK IS A "SIG?"

Local Vs. National – Recognized Vs. Independent

AFTER you've been around Mensa awhile the question may seem a silly one. If you're a new member, though, the question makes perfect sense – because SIGs can constitute one of the most important benefits of your Mensa membership.

Mensans have been talking about SIGs for years. Nowadays the term is creeping into more general use, prompted by the development of special interest groups in a number of other organizations.

Mensa came to the SIG concept very early for the same reason other large organizations are now adopting the term. The scope of the larger organization is so broad there's no basis for development of close associations, and something more is needed to bring people together. Mensa has always been a broad-basis organization. A high IQ score is all that's necessary for membership. People tend to be a bit more specialized than that. To form the basis for a friendship, you and I are going to have to have something more in common than our IQs. If we both like to play bridge, then we have something upon which to base a further relationship. Let's form a bridge group, and gather other people who share our interest. *Voilà*. A SIG!

Informal SIGs started in Mensa almost concurrently with Mensa itself. Whenever a local group got large enough to support activities beyond monthly meetings and an occasional workshop, discussion group or seminar, the next thing that happened was formation of local SIGs. Drinking, dining and games have formed the basis for SIGs in almost every local group of any size. Nowadays, local groups boast a wide variety of SIG activities. Topics include almost everything imaginable, from Absurdity to Zoology.

Formally recognized national SIGs began in 1973, when then-Chairman Marvin Grosswirth appointed Harper Fowley as Groups Officer. Harper was given instructions to get a sound SIG program going, and the Groups Officer has had responsibility for national SIGs ever since.

I am often asked whether this or that local SIG is connected in any way with the

national SIG by the same name. New members in particular may find it confusing that the local SIG news in their area's newsletter has so little to do with the national SIG news reported in this column in the *Mensa Bulletin*. SIGs with the same or similar names have different coordinators, and seem to have little connection with one another.

The answer isn't as simple as it might be. *Some* local SIGs are, indeed, local subdivisions of national SIGs, but many are not. For instance, many local groups have photography SIGs. There is a national **Photography SIG** as well, but the national group has no local counterparts which are organizationally connected with it. Likewise, many local groups have singles SIGs which meet periodically, but these have no connection with **Singles Network**, Mensa's nationally-recognized singles group – nor have they any connection with Singles SIG, a non-recognized group operating as an independent national SIG. There is a group known as Vampire SIG to which some Mensans belong, which delves into the occult and related topics; but which is in NO way connected to the **Vampire SIG** recognized by American Mensa, which is devoted to an interest in horror stories, movies and the like. On the other hand, many (but not all) local SIGs known as SEXYG are affiliates of the national SIG by the same name, and have coordinators appointed by the national SEXYG coordinator.

There is nothing in Mensa's bylaws to prevent *anyone* from forming and operating a special interest group on any topic whatever. The organization may be local, regional, national or international in scope, and may operate by whatever rules are established by its coordinator. The only restrictions that apply are with respect to the use of Mensa's name in association with the group. Recognized national SIGs, and *only* recognized national SIGs, may call themselves "special interest groups of American Mensa, Ltd." No SIG, whether recognized or not, may represent itself as speaking for Mensa, nor may any SIG act on Mensa's behalf or contract obligations for Mensa.

Recognized national SIGs must meet certain criteria. They must comply with official SIG policy, must fulfill the promises they make with respect to newsletter frequency, must remain active, and must be reasonably responsive to inquiries. Failure to meet these criteria will result in loss of recognition. As national SIGs, they are entitled to certain benefits. They will be publicized in this column when they are formed, and whenever a change in status is reported, and will be listed in the semi-annual SIG directory which is published here and is distributed to all prospective members. Their coordinators receive a newsletter, called *SIGnet*, which is an information exchange on matters of concern to coordinators. They can make use, if they wish, of certain other services, such as limited data processing services through the National Office, by writing to the Groups Officer.

Local and unofficial SIGs, on the other hand, are publicized, if at all, only in local newsletters. Publicity is given at the discretion of the local newsletter editor, sometimes according to established local group policies. Local SIGs represent a greater opportunity for personal interaction than do national ones, and are frequently responsible for a large percentage of the activities in a local group.

Sharing interests is what SIGs are all about, and both local and national groups serve this objective. The style and mechanics are often different, but the objective is the same – offering members more opportunities to benefit from their membership in Mensa.

On another subject, you may recently have seen a brilliant red glow in the sky, in the general direction of Kansas City. That was the Groups Officer's face, alit with embarrassment. In the March column, I cleverly referred to the coordinator of the **New Gnostics SIG** as both "Paula" and "Nancy." Her name, folks, is *Paulina D. Unsworth*. Well, at least I got the address right. It's P.O. Box 192, Berkeley, CA 94704. Let's see if I can do better with the (alphabetical) listing of new SIGs for this month:

4th Estate – Tom Jermyn announces this exchange of editing and publishing problems and solutions for local newsletter editors, which will objectively examine local editorial concerns and responsibilities. The quarterly newsletter, *M-Spectator*, is available for \$6/yr. Write Tom at #6 42nd Ave., Isle of Palms, SC 29451. A self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) will bring you a sample.

SKYDIVING

From a Viewpoint in Space

THE brilliant desert sunshine is subdued to shadowy tones, filtered through the yellowed windows of the ancient DC-3 that labors steadily upward. The heat and haze are left below as we climb into crystalline cool air above 14,000 feet. Our "dirt dives" (little pirouettes on the ground that rehearse our intended sky dance in the the air) are left below as well, although a few of our group are silently, with eyes closed and hands held near their shoulders, leaning left and right, opening and closing their fingers as they maneuver into imaginary back shots, accordion docks, grip switches and leg grips that will be their part in the six formations the four of us will sequentially build in free fall.

We're grateful for the leadership of our team captain. Her 1500 parachute jumps are a valuable resource of experience to those of us with only a few hundred jumps. Judy steps into the open doorway when the pilot signals "jump run" and gives the pilot the final course adjustments that compensate for wind drift.

We smile around our little group and exchange "pin checks" that ensure our main and reserve parachute systems are intact and our harnesses secure. Finally, Judy calls "Cut! Floaters out!" The pilot slows the engines as Jack and I climb backwards through the door, holding on to the door frame, wedging our feet against the 100 mph wind blast from the propeller. Judy and Al reach out to



grasp our jump suit sleeves. We look at Judy's eyes as she quickly ensures that our exit position is correct. She looks up at our expectant faces, smiles, and nods and begins the exit chant: "Ready! Set! Go!"

In an instant our group of four skydivers is away from the lumbering aircraft and spinning free in space. For a few moments we are going forward faster than we are falling, as we lose our horizontal speed. We don't wait for stable vertical descent; our sky dance begins as soon as our first formation (a classic "star") is flat and under control. Six seconds away from the aircraft Judy gives the deliberate nod that signals our first transition. We all release our grips and turn 90° to the right to grasp the left leg of the skydiver ahead. Without the grips to hold us together, a brief separation ensues; we patiently "fly our slot" until the grips are

complete again. Now a blind signal runs around our "donut" formation as Judy shakes her grip to begin the "wedge" formation.

Our vertical speed is now about 120 mph – a thousand feet of altitude whistling by us every six seconds. Our concentration on maneuvering is tempered by the knowledge that we have only one minute to dance together on the singing air we plunge through. I glance at my altimeter just as my automatic warning device commences its insistent electronic "beep beep" in my helmet, signaling 4,000 feet above the ground. We wave off and "track" away from the center of our last formation to gain the airspace each of us needs to safely open our parachute.

I check quickly to be sure I'm clear of my friends, then throw my pilot chute into the wind. The pilot chute pulls my main

Blood Donor SIG — Don Henderson, HCR-5, Box 30, Lockney, TX 79241, announces a SIG to promote contests, local group donor accounts, RG & AG mobile blood drives, etc., and seeks coordinators from all local groups. Don will send complete information for a large SASE.

Charismatic — Pros and cons of charismatic and mystical supernaturalism will be explored, as well as Christian philosophy and Bible study, in this SIG coordinated by Dale Adams, 3041 Stanton Circle, Carmichael, CA 95608. You can obtain information for a SASE, a sample newsletter

for a dollar, or a year's subscription (6 issues) for \$6.

Home Taught Kids — This SIG to discuss and support homeschoolers, exchange ideas on curricula, projects and concerns is coordinated by Holly Sullivan, P.O. Box 1043, Vashon Island, WA 98070. Send Holly a SASE for further information.

Mineral Guides — Eric Sepulveda, P.O. Box 6033, Longview, TX 75608, noted there is a need for people to guide visiting rockhounds to promising areas, and proposes this SIG as a contact point for those who

might serve as guides for gemstone, mineral and natural crystal field collecting. Send a SASE to Eric for more information.

The Old Codgers' Sauntering SIG — This SIG, organized by George W. Brister, OC, 1836 N.W. 15th Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73106, is for old codgers everywhere, age 65 and over. Mr. Brister has refined the art of public codgering, and wishes to share information and experiences with peers. He offers a newsletter for a SASE, and has yielded to the Group Officer's demand — granting said Groups Officer the franchise to

chute from its container and, with a gratifying "whump!", my 9-cell Dragonfly "square" is inflated and flying. Yes, *flying*. Modern parachutists can use air-foil shaped chutes that perform very much like hang gliders, giving us two sports for the price of one!

I pull my chute control lines and look for my fellow skydivers under their chutes. We are hundreds of feet apart now and I can hear a few "whoo-ee's!" and "yee-ows!" celebrating our six successful formations – a real accomplishment for an amateur group. We all fly toward the drop-zone, turning our chutes to catch the wind. My viewpoint from space is slowly giving way to Einstein's geometric distortion of space and time. Gravity reclaims me to the earth.

Jack yells out, "Case o' beer!" Our evening rap session will be a well-lubricated celebration. We gather up our chutes and walk to the packing area, recounting the dive just completed. We remember the times past when formations "funneled" into a confused mass, when someone "went low" and could not rejoin the formation, when "brain lock" grabbed someone and the dive sequence was forgotten, when the exit formation disintegrated and we spent half of our precious freefall minute trying to rebuild it. None of the scrambled formations is counted as a failure, though. *Every* sky dive is thrilling, and every skydive that ends with the skydivers safe on the ground is a success. And for another \$13 apiece we can do it all over again!

Al Nestlinger
34110 Selva #324
Laguna Niguel, CA 92677

Mensa's Skydiving SIG is for Ms who jump out of planes, or used to, or want to ... or are simply interested in the world's most exciting sport. The \$2 annual dues include a quarterly newsletter. To join, or to learn more about the SIG, contact

Al Warsh, Coordinator
62 Sherwood Dr
Mobile, AL 36606

someday form an auxiliary, the Future Codgers' Society.

Smile – Michele Martel, 1214 E. Northwest Highway, Arlington Heights, IL 60004, offers this opportunity for contact among people interested in dentistry with a special invitation to those who fear dentists to express their concerns. Send SASE for information.

Wisdom – A new expertise-referral service, previously mentioned in my April column, is now ready to accept inquiries. Coordinator J. Robin Christopher Reed, P.O.

WHATEVER HAPPENED To Call-an-M?

THE idea began as a seed – planted more than 10 years ago, nurtured and cultivated solely by a dedicated, single-minded Mensan named Rebecca Prather. It became a Mensa institution. It was Call-an-M, the member-to-member expertise-sharing service, and on July 1 of this year it will cease operation.

Before that happens, there are some of you who will want to know why. The answer is simple: Even in Mensa we sometimes miss the meeting of minds; the *reasons* are more complex.

Rebecca Prather credits a particularly exasperating search through a maze of government regulations with providing the impetus for Call-an-M. When she was finished, she had her information, a profound respect for the expert Mensan help that found it for her – and an idea: Mensans, like anyone else, frequently need expert information; moreover, Mensa has a rather diverse supply of experts among its members. Why not match up these needs and abilities within our organization?

A questionnaire circulated among members of Metropolitan Washington Mensa brought an overwhelmingly positive response. People were interested in participating – both as users and as "volunteer experts." Call-an-M was born.

The beginnings were slow and tedious, and the paperwork was incredible. Prather persisted, expanding her service into a net-

work of hundreds of volunteers. She had high hopes that her service would become one of the most practical and useful aspects of Mensa membership; and according to commentary from some of the users and volunteers of Call-an-M, she may have been correct. If so, why must CAM be dismantled?

To understand the dynamics involved, one must trace the history of CAM's interaction with the AMC.

About seven years ago, Rebecca decided to publicize her service as widely as possible, hoping to better serve the entire membership of Mensa. Her first choice was to print the complete CAM subject list twice each year in the *Bulletin*, but this plan was rejected for two reasons. These were (1) appropriateness and (2) cost versus benefit. *Should* a service like CAM be funded, even in part, by membership funds? Many agree with Rebecca that it should, while the consensus of the AMC has been the opposite. Part of the disagreement stems from the fact that the opposing parties classify the character and function of CAM quite differently.

Although the AMC considers this service to be, essentially, a special interest group (with a common interest in sharing information and expertise), Rebecca insisted that Call-an-M didn't belong in that category. After all, Mensa's hundred-odd SIGs each have a *specialized* interest in common; CAM covers an entire range of

Box 1132, Douglas, AZ 85607-1132, reports experts in many fields are ready to answer your questions. A SASE will bring you information on how to use the service. More volunteer experts are also being sought, so if you have expertise in one or more specialized fields you'd be willing to share with other members, write Mr. Reed for information about signing on.

The help-wanted section for this month lists two SIGs which have ceased operation. **Jehovah's Witnesses SIG** and **Non-Smokers' SIG** are now inactive, so if

you're interested in forming a SIG on either topic you may contact the Groups Officer for information on doing so.

There's still time to make plans to attend the AG. Workshops on SIG formation and SIG operation will be offered on Thursday, June 20, and Friday, June 21, respectively, so I hope to see you there.

Charles G. Schilling
Groups Officer
P.O. Box 12034
Kansas City, MO 64152
(816) 741-5696

topics. As we'll see, CAM came to be listed in the *Bulletin's* directory pages apart from the SIGs, as a *member-to-member* service. Like SIGs, these M-to-M services are expected by the AMC to be self-supporting. Membership dues fund only operational expenses and *organization-to-member* services – those that can be expected to benefit a great number of members.

Supporters of group funding for CAM hoped that, given proper exposure to the members, CAM would prove to be the kind of service that members would *want* to support. The AMC, on its part, declined to give Rebecca the funding she wanted without convincing evidence that CAM would benefit many times more members than had used it in the past. Prolonged discussion has brought the two positions no closer together.

The cost to run the 2½ page Call-an-M subject list twice a year in the *Bulletin* would be about \$5,000, and that list would displace other material. Based on participation in Call-an-M by only a small fraction of the membership, there was tremendous editorial and administrative doubt about the value of the plan. Until that question was resolved, the *Bulletin* could only offer support with small boxed ads.

Undaunted, Rebecca won a compromise from the AMC, recognizing CAM as a service (rather than a SIG), and allowing her to include the CAM subject list with the membership cards that went out to all new and continuing members. At a cost of about \$1,500 – 3¢ for each member in the country – the CAM subject list at last reached the hands of every member. Participation in the service increased immediately, reaching its all-time high of over 500 members per year, and maintaining roughly that level (up to 1¼% of the membership) for several years.

Another part of Prather's agreement with the AMC involved charging for the service. Subject lists were sold for 25¢; five requests for information cost 50¢ ... then \$1. She began saving the money to buy a computer system, looking forward to the day when the service could be turned over to another coordinator, and the uncertainty of volunteer computer time could be eased.

In 1982 the AMC stopped including the subject lists with membership cards. With CAM activity peaking at just over 1% of the membership – in spite of the annual distribution of the subject list to all members – they felt that the ongoing expense could

no longer be justified.

With that, Call-an-M activity dropped to about 100 requests for information per year. Prather was dismayed and frustrated; many of her volunteers were upset. She decided to take her case “to the people.” At the 1984 Annual Gathering's Annual Business Meeting, Rebecca introduced this motion to the assembled members:

WHEREAS, Call-an-M, the intra-Mensa expertise-sharing service, is used by over 500 members per year during periods of membership-wide list distribution, and

WHEREAS, this simple availability of the impressive resource which is the basis of this service is deeply appreciated by an even greater number of members,

IT IS MOVED, that the AMC seek ways to keep the Call-an-M service alive and readily available to all members.

Additional information on the service and the costs of membership-wide distribution was attached to the motion. It passed unanimously. The AMC reiterated its suggestions that help CAM become self-supporting – in its view the only responsible way to preserve the service; Prather rejected these suggestions, insisting that the motion had at least *implied* approval of direct AMC funding for Call-an-M.

Attempting to demonstrate that intent, Prather collected over 90 signatures from members in her local group (hosts of the 1984 AG), asking for funding of up to 10¢ per member for list distribution. Nonetheless, the language of the actual motion was not explicit in that regard; the issue remained unresolved.

Just prior to circulating that petition, Prather had two motions introduced on her behalf at the August AMC meeting, asking for resumption of list distribution and/or publication of the list in the *Bulletin*. Both

motions failed. At the November AMC meeting, three more motions failed: for the resumption of list distribution; vote on CAM funding by the membership; and for \$300 to add to the \$1,200 in the CAM treasury, to resume membership-wide list distribution.

Tired of fighting, and exhausted by 10 years of single-handedly running the service, Prather announced the “death” of Call-an-M. She spent most of her remaining funds on a mailing to about 6,200 members, offering a last chance to use the service. Some criticized her for this, asserting that the money could have kept the service alive under a new coordinator – who might at least try some of the ideas for self-support that Rebecca had rejected.

Call-an-M will continue service until July 1, 1985; thereafter Rebecca will keep the CAM files in hope of a “better future climate” for running the service as she envisioned it. Others who believe in Rebecca's original idea are ready to build a new self-supporting expertise sharing service, using their own resources. A new national SIG called WisdoM, coordinated by J.R.C. Reed of Douglas, Arizona, is already accepting inquiries and making referrals. See the “Special Interest Groups” column in this issue for details.

It proves one thing, no matter who was right or wrong about Call-an-M: Good ideas do not die. Rebecca Prather, and the 571 volunteers who gave 10 years of their time and expertise to make CAM work, should be commended. They have given us a legacy for the future of Mensa that cannot be denied.

LOCAL OFFICERS! SIG COORDINATORS!

LocSecs, Editors and Area, SIGHT, Gifted Children's and National SIG Coordinators: If you're moving or leaving office before mid-September, please notify the Brooklyn office right away. This advance notice will help us get all the address changes and new officer listings in the upcoming September Directory. Thank you!

Please send these changes to the Local Groups Department by June 21. Thank you!

LAST CHANCE!

Call-an-M, the free M-to-M expertise-sharing service ends July 1, 1985. For information on this 10-year-old, 571-volunteer service, send a SASE and 25¢ quickly to:

Rebecca Prather
2902 Cleave Dr.
Falls Church, VA 22042

MENSANS, MAGNOLIAS AND MANIA

Kent B. Van Cleave

THE FIRST ANNUAL GREAT DISMAL SWAMP RG

Reportage of this opening episode in a most remarkable chain of events is made very difficult by a few perverse problems:

- Many participants have only a dim recollection of the weekend, and accounts vary to a disturbing degree. Dr. Ahmed Jokev, physician to the exiled ruler of Djbootie, fortunately accompanied the Sheik to FAGDSRG. He was able to diagnose the mental disorder as *Mnemonia* – “characterized by an immediate and total loss of memory, followed by a recall so overwhelming and intense that it surpasses actuality and continues flight into the ether of poetic imagination!” Dr. Jokev’s research paper on the affliction should appear soon in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. . . .

- Many Mensans *simply don’t know* if they were there (viz. the query from Houston’s Richard Jones, editor of *Informensa*: “Was I there? And if I *was* there . . . did I have fun?”)

- No photographic record remains; official photos were allegedly lost to an unruly alligator, while snapshots taken by participants were either impounded by Photomat or mysteriously disintegrated in the mail

- Greater Pungo, Virginia, site of the gathering, has reportedly been overgrown by a sudden infestation of kudzu; investigative teams have not yet been able to cut their way through. . . .

From the confusion of accounts, one consensus emerges: the FAGDSRG was anything but a dismal time. In fact, the goings-on defy description. We can probably accept AMC Chairman Henry Noble’s assessment as factual: that this was “surely the most unusual RG weekend in Mensa history.”

Was I there?
And if I *was* there . . .
did I have fun?

Then again, we should maybe look to a different source for accuracy’s sake; Mr. Noble had obviously been the victim, not only of erratic memory, but of a *second* malady that infected everyone there: the inexplicable surfacing of odd behavior, either long-suppressed or completely out of character (and invariably embarrassing). A perfect example of both afflictions is provided by a letter Henry wrote to Jowanda Karrick, author of the most detailed account of the weekend. The letter was on newly-printed letterhead from “The Castle” and signed “Henry Rex:”

We greatly appreciate having [the advance copy of] the Review because Our memories of the event are rather fuzzy. No doubt some will attribute our memory lapse to excessive consumption of certain wines before their time. Such is not the case. In fact, the cause of the problem is oxygen deprivation. First, We were overcome by swamp gas when We took a wrong turn on the way to the (less than) Grand Hotel. Then, after being rescued from the morass, We became short of breath while trying to accommodate the large number of Our devoted female subjects waiting to hug Us and demonstrate their concern for Our well being.

This unfamiliarly regal attitude is said to have persisted even for several weeks following Henry’s departure from Greater Pungo.

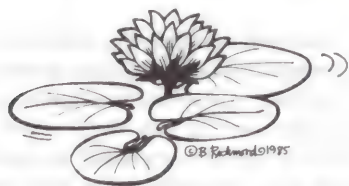
The potency of this puzzling syndrome is attested to by Henry Noble’s reputation for good sense, modesty and decorum – and the fact that many others were more seriously stricken than he. Even so, he was accused by a hysterical waiter of making wine bottles disappear (although he quickly exonerated himself by pointing out the 39 empty bottles at his table – obviously still there). Worse, his lunchtime address on “Power Seduces, or AMC Groupies” was curtailed as he was carried off by seven adoring women.

IT’S like learning about a new TV serial – a sort of combination soap-opera, docudrama, creature-feature and bloopers show. Everybody swears it’s based on real life, though you see nobody swearing on a stack of Bibles (at best, they’ll swear over a few glasses of wine).

You’ve missed the first two episodes, and you’re curious. So you ask around, hoping to get a reliable synopsis of the show to date. What you get is a confusion of stories so strange they make your head spin!

That’s much the way I felt when I encountered a series of bizarre reports coming from Tidewater Mensa and elsewhere, purporting to describe two Mensa regional gatherings held in the Great Dismal Swamp region of Virginia. I have checked them out, and – although individual versions didn’t always match – I’ve managed to merge them into a reasonably self-consistent account. I think you’ll find it . . . well, *intriguing*. . . .

Only about a dozen people in all of American Mensa really know what happened – and *they* haven’t been saying much. As best I can tell, it all started about a year and a half ago, when Wanda moved to Virginia and met Rick, Joe and Karen. Apparently, due to their machinations (details on them in a minute), the Great Dismal Swamp – heretofore known more for its dismal qualities than its great ones – was invaded by Mensans from all over the country in an escapade called the First Annual Great Dismal Swamp Regional Gathering.



It’s almost scary: In spite of a total lack of advance promotion for the gathering, nearly 500 Mensans are said to have attended, including a list of notables that reads like a “Who’s Who of Mensa” – all apparently bent on destroying their own (and each other’s) reputations!

But worst of all, he set off the metal detector at the Pungo International Airport when attempting to board his flight home. The cause? 87 keys – 86 from the Greater Pungo Grand Hotel and one eventually matched to a stolen '79 Ford pickup.



They say not even our seemingly superhuman Executive Director Margot Seitelman escaped this mysterious mental ailment. Throwing responsibility to the selective standards of Mensa to the winds, she quite arbitrarily granted lifetime membership to . . . *an alligator*. True, Amrus M. Alligator came highly recommended by dozens of FMs in attendance, who proclaimed him a most universally gifted lounge lizard. But I'm afraid the number of alligator bites treated by the first aid clinic, along with Amrus' arrest on a morals charge, show Margot's action to have been rash indeed.

That elegant lady of the South (and Region 3 Vice Chairman) Rose Lee Crutcher, who had given an early demonstration on the art of arranging artificial flowers, suddenly took to hurling iron magnolias with deadly accuracy at those who earned her displeasure. One ferrous blossom sent the waiter of the missing wine bottles to an early retirement; four others still grace the cinder-block wall behind Sheriff Billy Bob McAllister's desk at the Greater Pungo jailhouse – souvenirs of the liberation of (you guessed it) Amrus M. Alligator.

PROBABLE CAUSE?

Maybe it was the food. Cathy Funston presided over a squad of chefs from Huntsville Mensa to produce this Saturday night banquet: Hors d'oeuvres of Grits on Ritz and Grits Sushi; an appetizer of Grits Fettucine; Cream of Grits soup; the entree, Grits with Marinara sauce, accompanied by Cheese Grits and Hot Grits Garlic Rolls – all served with an "earthy but unpretentious" wine called Château de la Grits du Mogen David, and topped off with Chocolate Grits Mousse à la mode. I can't bear to tell you what flavor the ice cream was.

Ingredients for the entire repast were imported in a special tank from David Mann's hydroponic grits farm, and prepared according to *The Official Confederate Uprising and Grits Appreciation Creative History, Cookbook and Sculpting Guide*, using Funston's handy and versatile Sledge-o-Matic. (She was later seen using it to separate Dave Mann from the assembled members of the Nymphomaniac SIG.)

It gets worse. From the sounds of her review of other banquet fare, former *Bulletin* editor Katherine DeWitt, Jr.'s early resignation may have resulted from, not overwork, but this:

Stewed Spanish moss is not made much better by topping it with toasted 'skeeter wigglers. The *front* legs of frogs are not the usual portion one dines on – for good reason! Peanut shells with ham drippings offer a pleasing texture surprise, but not much more. You have redefined "banquet."

Katherine, however, redefined sleepwear. Eyewitness reports describe her nighttime attire as "a charcoal gray silk suit with a stunning scarlet ascot and a pearl gray fedora." *It must* have been the food!

One might have hoped that the program of seminars and workshops would have retained some vestige of intellectualism. . . . Not so.

The panel discussion with Dr. Dot Werblo, Roxanne Cramer, Art Mattson, Theresa Brunone and Bill Tylock on "How to Raise Your IQ by Eating Gifted Children" was going fine until it was interrupted by an impromptu discourse on "Soylent Green: An Alternative to Mensa Retirement Homes" from precocious young Ms Victor Stevko and Jeanine Bale.

Sally Morris Reid, chairman of the Redistricting Committee, was scheduled to explain the new regional alignment; instead, she defended Dave Michel's proposal that New York City, Chicago and Los Angeles become Region One – based on "super-saver" airfares.

The Winetasters SIG shattered all precedents by picking another "unassuming" vintage – '84 Chateau de Ripple – as winner.

Separate meetings scheduled for Impotence SIG, Celibacy SIG, SEXYG, Gay SIG, SIGH! and the Nymphomaniac SIG were inadvertently slated for the same meeting room. They came within inches of a merger, causing AMC Groups Officer Kevin Johnson to become pale and shaken, muttering, "I quit! I quit!"

THE GAMES MENSANS PLAY

Even the normally light-hearted activities (by any *normal* RG standards) were tinged with violence. When the hospitality suite ran out of wine, riot was barely avoided by the quick action of Harper Fowley, who called his friends, "Big Red" and Thor Hiney, at the Hiney Winery. Only when everyone had a luke-warm Hiney in hand did the tension subside.

The frog bobbing contest was the most popular game, by leaps and bounds – and it contributed to dinner, too. Karen Tiede and Dick Branson, both long-time frog bobbars from Kentuckiana Mensa, were the winners. For the moment it seemed that things were back to normal.

Again, not so. Poker SIG engaged in a friendly game with the Probabilities SIG. The former had to go home early; the latter emerged with sufficient funds to attend every RG scheduled for the next five years.

And when the local Great Dismal Swamp Densa team lost to the challenging Region 3 Hi-Q Bowl Team led by David Hume . . . well, that was the beginning of the end:

The frustrated Densans hijacked the airport limo, hoping to get to Cleveland. They were thwarted by Bud Martin and his merry band of soldiers of misfortune. In a pitched battle, one of the Densans threw a low-yield nuclear grenade; Bud pulled the pin and threw it back – unfortunately over-throwing into the lobby of the Grand Hotel. Carnage was avoided by this unusual series of events:



Arriving at the FAGDSRG, Tom and Charlotte Jermyn had been accosted in the parking lot (directly beneath the window of the hospitality suite) by the Virginia EPA, officiously looking for kudzu seeds in the treads of their tires. Although a few were found next to some small but rapidly growing vines, Tom and Charlotte persuaded the officials that they were blameless – as the kudzu seeds in question could have hitched a ride anywhere along their route to Greater Pungo.

Following a plot worthy of Arthur Hailey, Tidewater Mensa's Karen Riggan was fleeing

the advances of noted ad man Don Henderson. Into the hospitality suite she flew, accidentally knocking over the punchbowl (and you know what Mensa punchbowls are like) into David Mann's hydroponic grits tank. The resultant mixture (dubbed "Agent Mauve" by Gay SIG Coordinator Roger Starr) rapidly filled the room and began bubbling out the window – into the vicinity of the Jermyns' car.

Providentially, the fearsome foam overflowed through the hallways of the Grand Hotel, triggering a mass exodus of Mensans and staff, who retreated to a nearby hillside to watch.

Says reporter Jowanda Karrick: "It is really hard to say which was the more awesome sight – the mushroom cloud over the ruins of the Grand Hotel, or Agent Mauve hungrily feasting on the cringing kudzu."

The final outcome seems to have gone in favor of the kudzu; the radiation from the blast evidently either mutated the kudzu into a resistant strain, or converted the potent Agent Mauve into mere fertilizer. Authorities expect to cut their way through and have the answer by next November.

Jowanda Karrick is the only surviving child of Jomama and Jopapa Karrick, former ruler of the Land of Djbootie. As a result of a people's revolution, Sheik Djbootie and his family were forced to leave their country, pursued by death squads from their homeland. The Djbootie family sought anonymity by moving to Biloxi, Mississippi and changing their names. At college in Kentucky she met Harper Fowley, who introduced her to the Mensan approach to social intercourse.

She moved to Pungo in 1979 and lives in a castle surrounded by the Great Dismal Swamp alligators, who act as her bodyguards. She knew Amrus M. Alligator when he was a nobody, and was immediately taken by his universal giftedness. As the Greater Pungo proctor for Tidewater Mensa, she was able to test the alligator, who scored an astounding 690 on the Cattel scale. Amrus took his name upon acceptance to Mensa to keep Margot's records straight ... [and you've heard the rest].

Wanda Wolfe, at 38, is a single veteran of the Air Force, two marriages, one grandson and eight years in Mensa. Before moving from Biloxi, Mississippi to take a systems support analyst job (actual title: Person to Wake Up with Late-Night Problems) in Newport News, VA, Wanda served as national coordinator for SEXYG. Since the move, she has been LocSec of Tidewater Mensa, international coordinator of SEXYG, and now editor of *M-Tides*. She says she finds fun everywhere she goes in Mensa, but my suspicion is she takes it with her – you'll see.

Having sampled the active Mensa fare of groups from Honolulu to Houston to Heidelberg, Wanda decided there wasn't enough happening in Tidewater Mensa – so she set about finding some confederates to light a fire under the group. She found them.

Joe Bemrich (a.k.a. "Saturday Night Samurai") is a 28-year-old Navy man and father of two, with the distinction of being the first elected officer of Tidewater Mensa. More to the point of our story, he was to become the chairman of the *Second Annual Great Dismal Swamp Regional Gathering*.



I'm afraid this is a severely condensed compilation of the facts (due to space limitations) that were reported by the various participants; most of it has come from the enigmatic vice coordinator of Tidewater Mensa (and International Anonymous M SIG coordinator), Jowanda Karrick – whose credentials speak well for her reliability. Here's her bio, adapted from *M-Tides*:

WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE?

Now, I wouldn't want to tax your credulity ... but (1) the story isn't over yet, and (2) the entire escapade up to this point was the brainchild, so to speak, of just four Mensans. Before we continue the saga, here's a look at how it began. ...

Karen Riggan, then a member for barely half a year (she joined for an ego-boost to escape from mid-life trauma), was raised in an FBI family. As area coordinator for Virginia Beach and a member of the Executive Committee of Tidewater Mensa, she tells stay-at-home Ms the same thing she tells her two teenage kids at mealtimes: "You won't know if you'll like it unless you try it!"



At SAGDSRG; TOP, L-R: Karen Riggan shuffles papers as friends chat at registration. Rose Lee Crutcher is gang-hugged on arrival. Larry Davis, Maureen Young, Mary Prior and Henry Noble cheer Paul Vogel and Henry Roll's impromptu foot-nibbling contest; Paul's confusion, said Judge Wanda Wolfe, made Hank a shoe-in. LEFT: No brass knuckles for Rose Lee; her left hand's packing iron. CENTER: Frog bobbbers go off the deep end; several found that the critters inflate just like balloons. RIGHT: Other trivial pursuits abounded.

Finally, **Rick Barnhart**, 30, is a department store buyer, father of two, and Wanda's predecessor as editor of *M-Tides*. Before that, he was treasurer and public relations chairman for Tidewater Mensa. His wife wishes he'd spend more time with the family and less with Mensa – a hope regularly thwarted by the Mensans (and others) who enjoy his company so much. To illustrate, in a recent local newspaper feature on Mensa, the columnist seemed as taken with Rick as with Mensa itself.

Things got busy in a hurry, in spite of logistical problems that would have stopped less determined souls dead in their tracks:

Tidewater Mensa covers a huge geographical area . . . and nine or ten cities. It's bisected by the two-mile-wide channel of the James River. It is strewn with military bases representing every branch of service, including the world's largest Navy base; as a result, military Mensans are often shipped out just as they have become active. Yet in spite of these substantial obstacles, the contagious enthusiasm spread by Joe, Wanda, Karen, Rick and other active Tidewater Ms has brought a level of activity and growth seldom seen *anywhere* in Mensa.

Tidewater membership exploded by 16.9 percent to 221 during the past mem-

bership year (only four other groups its size or larger did as well); a survey in *M-Tides* drew an astounding 10+ percent response from members; their monthly meetings draw an amazing 20-30 percent of their membership; fully *half* of the Second Annual (etc., etc.) Committee have been members for less than a year; and, delightfully, the group has had *two* M&M engagements and a wedding in the past year!

Even with that kind of success, one might wonder why the fledgling group would undertake such a demanding project as a regional gathering. I guess it was just a matter of desire. The fantastic four were seen (well, okay . . . they were *conspicuous*) at the 1984 Derbytownt Regional Gathering, and apparently enjoyed it so much they decided they'd have one of their own. Or two. . .

THE SECOND ANNUAL GREAT DISMAL SWAMP RG

Better known as SAGDSRG (some people can actually pronounce it), the gathering was held February 15-17 at the Virginia Beach Hilton . . . since Greater Pungo was no longer accessible (and now sans hotel) and no other hotel in the state would allow Bud

Martin on the premises – hand grenades or no.

Strangely, there was less written about this gathering than the first – even counting the considerable advertising that was done in the Mensa press. We have merely the program of events, some photos (taken with a special armored camera that made three negatives per shot, and processed at gunpoint by the local Virginia Beach Photomat), and a few anecdotes that prove the intention of some participants to outdo their exploits at FAGDSRG.

To avoid some anticipated problems, the RG Committee wisely gave Henry Noble a master key to the hotel, and strip-searched Bud Martin for weapons. Cathy Funston, exercising her own precautions (unbeknownst to anyone else there), sent Dave Mann out for enchiladas, much to the dismay of the Nymphomaniac SIG; RG officials may still be unaware that Dave was seen that Sunday in a Phoenix Taco Bell.

The SAGDSRG program was a bit more like the fare most RG-goers expect. Events included:

The Great Joke-Off, with Jokemeister Larry Davis (sitting in for Dr. Ahmed Jokev, who was called away to attend Sheik Djbootie). . .



TOP, L-R: Cassandra Costley, Harry Rider, Henry Noble, Harper Fowley and Rose Lee Crutcher share lunch with anonymous friends. Gatherings columnist Debby Greene holds her own. Past International Chairman Frank Weil with former British Secretary Barbara Courtney. BOTTOM, L-R: Jeanine Bale, done in by the Saturday night party. The Saturday Night Samurai flanked by the Greater Pungo Players. Ralph Rudolph and friend getting physical.

The Infamous SEXYG Fishbowl, where SEXYG editor Mary Prior recalled an encounter in another glass enclosure – the scenic elevator at the Washington AG – and exposed Joe Bemrich's closely-guarded secret: Just what *is* under the Saturday Night Samurai's kimono!

Ralph Rudolph's **Armchair Treasure Hunt**, which was rumored to have produced a record 798 armchairs. . . .

A Martial Arts Workshop, at which one instructor was mysteriously rendered unconscious – with no trace of injury but a strange magnolia-shaped bruise on the forehead. . . .

The Great Dismal Swamp Frog-Bobbing Contest (without swamp buggies this time, due to the limited size of the swimming pool), where there was some controversy concerning the woman who used her chest to herd frogs along the bottom of the pool, the better to deposit them at pools. . . .

The Jowanda Karrick Look-Alike Contest, won by Harper Fowley – who shamelessly promised to come to the *Third Annual* (etc., etc.) in one of Rose Lee Crutcher's red dresses if the judges would give him the nod. . . .

The Great Dismal Swamp Follies, unfortunately a dismal failure: Ralph Rudolph's

presentation on FAGDSRG was scrambled beyond intelligibility; Chris Keck's bawdy rendition of "The Virgin Sturgeon" was never rendered; and the new musical comedy, "South Pungo!" will be remembered mainly for the ad-lib script adjustments by the Pungo Players. The bright spot of the evening was John Treffeisen's salute to Jopapa Karrick: the national anthem of the great leader's homeland – "Sheik Djbootie," as originally recorded by K.C. and the Sunshine Band.

Due to the mysterious disappearance of David Mann, his address at the Farewell Program on Sunday was replaced by an impromptu eulogy for Dave delivered by Chairman Henry Noble. Henry calmly reassured the teary women and grinning men in the audience that rumor of Dave's abduction by death squads was probably false; more likely was foul play by that jealous lounge lizard, Amrus, who wanted all the women to himself for the weekend (and incidentally had appeared exceptionally fat since Friday). Chairman Noble echoed the palpable hope in the air that somewhere in Mensa there is a man ready to fill the void David Mann will leave in the lives of FMs. (This author expects that such a man would have to be similarly tall, blond, bearded and single. . . .)

I would hope that the example set by Joe, Wanda, Karen, Rick and Jowanda Karrick (and the many Tidewater Mensa members who hopped on the energetic bandwagon) might be followed by Ms all over the country who want a little more excitement from their Mensa membership. All it takes is desire, some creative imagination . . . and some very enjoyable work.

As for myself, I'm looking forward to the Third Annual Gread Dismal Swamp Regional Gathering, as I missed the other two . . . I think. . . .

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BORED?

Are you tired of waiting for the fun to start in *your* Mensa group? You're probably not alone. Call your Regional Vice Chairman; you'll get help putting together a team to get the party rolling. Why sit back and miss out on the *real* fun of Mensa companionship – when help and friendship is just a phone call away? Do it today!

TESTS AND TERMINALS

EACH month in this column I try to address a subject, preferably in the "intelligence" field, that has produced correspondence from members or the media in the preceding few weeks. It is obvious that if half a dozen inquiries are received on one highly specific subject, it is of interest to members, as most people simply don't bother to write. It is for this reason that I have delayed using some of the extremely interesting material that has been submitted. When there is a spurt of interest in a particular field, I quickly research it and try to provide additional information to supplement that which has appeared in various journals, on television or in popular magazines.

This month's column is on automated intelligence tests. The subject has come up many times in the last 18 months or so, and recently two articles have appeared in British magazines which cover the subject somewhat more thoroughly than any articles I have seen locally.

Of course, as a practicing psychologist, I am fully aware of the automated testing procedures that have been used here for some time. Every issue of the various psychological magazines advertises tests designed for computers. However, after nine phone calls, I was unable to find any intelligence tests on computer that have been properly normed and standardized.

The National Foundation for Education Research in England, which publishes a sometimes bulletin, had the following to say about computerized intelligence tests: "Where response times are a crucial factor ... the conventional computer keyboard is much too complicated a response mechanism. ... It is almost impossible to develop safeguards against the illegal pirating or copying of software programs." You can imagine the results if IQ tests could be easily pirated.

The Standing Committee on Test Standards of the British Psychological Society has a report in the December, 1984 issue of its journal (pp. 416-417) that is extremely

dubious about putting intelligence tests on computer. Among other items, it indicates that "computer only" tests have not been normed and standardized, and that existing paper and pencil tests are being computerized. It states that although the instructions, test items, responses and scores may seem comparable, they are, in fact, very different:

The situations differ in terms of print, layout of display, colour values, density of diagrams, and the dynamics of moving from one to another or repeating attempts at responding. ... Answering an item by pressing a key requires a shift in attention vertically as compared to marking a test paper or an answer pro forma, and computers regulate a testee's pace in a different way.

... [T]here could be marked individual variation between the two conditions. These might not be apparent if the only data taken into consideration were raw score distributions or derived scores obtained from samples or respondents. Any variations arising from the sources mentioned above are likely to influence validities more than ... reliability coefficients, standard errors ... or characteristic curves. ... The points made indicate that computerization may be expected to change the nature of a test. The possible changes need to be studied and any effects reported in manual supplements or new manuals.

There is also concern, as expressed in the *APA Monitor* of January, 1984, of tests being used in fields in which individuals are not trained (because such tests would be so easy to administer and score, but not to interpret accurately).

In short, we're not yet at the point of computerized intelligence testing. Despite the apparent similarities, the mere process of using a computer, and the subtle but very real differences in presentation, timing and visualization, make current norms inapplicable. We will probably have to wait for a

test that has been developed and normed specifically for a computer. It has not been done, to my knowledge, as of this writing.

As readers of this column know, I have been searching for hard data on the Venezuelan attempt to improve intelligence, for quite a while (five years to be exact). Finally, a report has appeared in the *APA Monitor* for March, 1985. It seems that the project was originally a joint Harvard-Venezuela program, but is no longer. It also seems that Dr. Machado lost his job after the last election. The conclusions drawn by Raymond Nickerson of Bolt, Beranek & Newman (BBN) Laboratories in Cambridge, Massachusetts, a subcontractor on the project, are paraphrased below. The report has not yet been published, incidentally.

The project didn't work any "miracles" ... But students in the experimental group did make "substantial" gains on the special ability tests designed by researchers to examine progress in the specific thinking abilities being taught. The gains they made on the standardized general abilities tests were statistically significant but much more modest.

It also seems researchers in the project cannot even positively exclude a Hawthorne effect (a placebo-like effect) whereby students in the experimental group are more motivated simply as a function of their receiving special attention. In such a case the effect appears regardless of what kind of special attention they receive.

To summarize — as far as is reported here — the students did improve on the course content they were taught. Their scores went up on tests designed to measure how well they had learned the material covered. My personal opinion is that that result is not at all surprising. The second point is that while they made gains in standardized tests, they were much smaller.

This is in full accord with what we know about transfer of training. The old theory that you taught Latin, Greek and mathematics to "strengthen" the mind has long been superseded by the finding that teaching Latin and Greek aids the student in learning Latin, Greek, and those word forms derived from Latin and Greek ... but not in language overall. If you want gains in language comprehension, you teach language comprehension. There are hundreds of studies indicat-

ing that transfer of training (that is, carryover from one subject to another) is the strongest when the two subjects have many areas in common.

As far as the beneficial effect of mathematical training is concerned, there is also evidence that many of the studies were basically flawed. They found more logical thinking in the people who took advanced math, for example. It is also entirely possible that the people who go into advanced math classes are those who like the rigorous thinking required for these classes.

Another study found higher IQ scores after studying such subjects, but completely failed to take into account the "tracking" systems of most schools. It is only the brighter students who take advanced mathematics classes (or advanced Latin classes, or advanced progress classes of any kind, including those for college credit which are given in high schools).

Unfortunately, judging from my interpretation of the report, we're still looking. Dr. Herrnstein of Harvard feels the project was beneficial. The official (unpublished) report concludes that "evaluation of such a course is conceptually very difficult, and long-term effects have not been assessed." I'm waiting for that assessment before I come to any judgment.

Abbie F. Salny

**Director of Science and Education
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MEMO

to

Mensa Members

Again we have had some angry letters from would-be members who have had a bad experience with prior evidence submissions. Several applicants were "assured" by someone locally that a prior evidence score was acceptable; unfortunately, when it reached us, it wasn't.

The ill-will generated was tremendous. Please, don't fail to tell applicants to write or telephone the National Office to verify a prior evidence score. This will prevent such unhappy occurrences and the angry feelings they cause toward Mensa and toward the local group. We all want to share our pleasure in Mensa, and the best way to do that is to check first.

Abbie F. Salny

Supervisory Psychologist

IMPORTING TAXES . . . EXPORTING PROSPERITY

Toni Rizzo Johnson

TAX reform — tax increases — spending cuts — Congress is grappling with these issues this spring in an attempt to reduce the federal deficit. President Reagan will have presented his tax reform plan to Congress in late April or early May. He vows that there will be no tax increases, but insists that major tax reforms are necessary in 1985.

The question of tax reform is a sticky one, closely tied to the problem of deficit reduction. In Question #6 Bernard Mayoff asked, "How can tax reforms be implemented in this country? If the tax rates go down, but but are offset by an expanded tax base (so that the total taxes paid remain the same), is it worth the effort?"

"You bet it is!" says Norman E. Kidwell of West Springfield, Massachusetts. According to Norman:

Our present tax formula where bank interest and dividends are taxed, but interest on indebtedness is deductible, does not encourage thrift or the formation of capital so necessary for the creation of new jobs and stability. Feedback theory indicates that a change in this facet of the tax code would have a strong salutary effect on interest rates, and therefore on the deficit.

Another reason to opt for fewer or no deductions applies to contributions. On the assumption of a constant required total revenue, all taxpayers must pay a small share of any taxpayer's deduction for a gift to a charity, whether or not they happen to favor that particular organization. Is that equitable?

Similar reasoning applies to advertising being a deductible expense for businesses. I must pay a small but finite share of the astonishing cost of every TV commercial and every junk flyer that stuffs the mailbox, whether or not I favor the products touted.

Other factors such as implementation of the Grace Report recommendations, elimination of counter-productive welfare programs, etc., have been well publicized, and can lead to deficit reduction without tax increases.

Only with guts on the part of the administration, augmented by an outpouring of pres-

sure on our representatives and senators from taxpayers [can tax reforms be implemented]. We should prod our pork-barreling congressmen toward substantive action on tax reform and the deficit. Let's get the Balanced Budget Amendment passed.

Carl Weston of Durango, Colorado writes:

The present tax system is probably in principle as close to "equitable" as our political system will allow. In practice there are factors that distort the principle. The cost of litigation allows affluent taxpayers to argue tax disputes more successfully than those in lower brackets, and the time lag between changed economic conditions and the amending of tax laws to address them is also a problem.

Most of the complicated rules and loopholes are the result of compromises arising from court rulings or from the legislative process. Since its inception, Congress has used the income tax system to promote and protect select interest groups. It was beneficial as long as it was in the national best interest, but whenever such protection was narrow or parochial it became a national liability. The best and most equitable solution is to broaden the tax base by limiting the exceptions, while retaining the progressive graduated scale.

One relatively untouched tax base is foreign-owned American land and natural resources. Maintaining the political and economic stability that attracts and protects foreign investment in this country consumes a large portion of our tax dollars, and accounts for much of the bloated defense budget. Trade deficits create foreign wealth which is invested here, driving up the cost of land and other finite resources. Unaffordable housing and the farm crisis are directly related to land inflation.

An annual tax on foreign land and natural resource holdings in this country would reduce the deficit and would identify who owns how much of America. Such a tax could be fine-tuned to counterbalance foreign trade

deficits. Of course this would have repercussions on foreign investments by wealthy Americans, but how many middle and lower class Americans have foreign investments?

Foreign investors should be prohibited from lobbying or contributing to PACs. As it is, they have gained enormous wealth and political power from our finite resources, which they use to protect their American and foreign interests at the expense of middle class Americans, who are forced to compete with an international wealthy class for their own resources.

Reagan's preferred alternative seems to be a program against the "underground economy," which consists primarily of Americans in the middle and lower socioeconomic classes. In this endeavor the government seems only able to catch the inept and those lacking access to lawyers and CPAs; thus the perception of inequity is perpetrated.

John M. Tokash of Newell, West Virginia thinks the solution lies in increased local responsibility for collecting taxes and implementing programs:

We are between a rock and hard place. According to our elected officials, tax reform is not the answer. (1) Lowering taxes on money already being taxed, and taxing money not being taxed will supposedly result in a decrease in income. (2) Decreased spending by the federal government is an unrealistic expectation. Conservatives demand more spending on defense and liberals demand more on social programs (allow me a broad generalization). The problem, as I see it, relates directly back to an issue of major importance about 125 years ago. Namely, states' rights.

It appears to me that the city, county and state levels of government should receive the bulk of the tax money from private citizens and small business. And it is at these levels that the majority of social, educational and economic programs should be administered and funded. Sure, there will be abuses. People are people, and crooks are crooks. But consider this. The national food stamp program is administered by the Department of Agriculture for the best interest of the farmers, not the participants. A local welfare program would result in more efficient administration, and a program that would meet the needs of a specific region.

Furthermore, a "trickle-up" system would provide an incentive for contracting with private industry for management and labor forces. For example, ABC Consulting,

KLM Management and GHI, Inc. might come up with three different approaches for solving the problems of welfare in West Virginia. If a system works efficiently, then Kentucky, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, etc., may choose the same type of program instituted by the same company, thus reducing the duplication of effort. Also, it has been shown that private industry can provide better service at a lower cost than government.

National defense could be funded through taxes on large corporations, multinational corporations and import taxes, as well as a levy imposed on state governments. This levy could be based in part on the size and number of military installations located in each state. Recently, the closing of obsolete or unnecessary military installations was strongly opposed by the senators and representatives of the states involved. Under the system outlined above, the states would change their tune.

I am sure that most individuals would feel better knowing that most of their taxes were being spent by the level of government over which they have greater control at the polls. However, let us always remember some important principles:

1. *Any form of taxation is unfair to some degree to some people.*
2. *Our tax laws are formed by lawyers and accountants, and voted on by people who can afford to be elected.*
3. *Regardless of what is taxed, when it is taxed, who is taxed, where, how, and why it is taxed, the consumer pays the tax.*

Bruce Langford of Riverside, California believes that a national sales tax would be more equitable than the income tax:

I am at a loss to understand why we do not adopt what seems to be the easiest and most practical solution, a national sales tax. Logically, those with the most money do the most spending, so such a system would be infinitely more equitable than the one we have now.

The advantages seem obvious. We would all pay our fair share as we go along, thus eliminating all deductions, reams of national and personal paper-work, millions of costly man-hours and all tax fraud. Of course the price of all goods would immediately go up considerably, but then so would the size of our paychecks.

I'm sure there must be some logical reason why this would not work, but the only

minor difficulties I have ever been able to imagine are but a trifle compared to the cumbersome behemoth under which we now live.

QUESTION #9

Bernard F. Mayoff of Richardson, Texas contributed this month's question:

How can the non-communist, developed countries bring the advances of the modern world to underdeveloped countries? In light of the Union Carbide disaster, can the U.S. provide any assistance to the development of India? In Pakistan it has been suggested that the educated and those with wealth have fled the country or have already been killed. And a new generation is being trained by Russia and will come to power knowing a Russian way of life. Unfortunately, exported Western advances sometimes bring danger and resentment – when they are allowed at all.

Assuming that the Western World will not force modern thinking on another country by force of arms, how can we contribute to the collective advancement of civilization? Let us not debate whether modern society is better than existing societies; that is not the question. The question is, for those things that are better, how can their benefits be introduced into existing societies? Undoubtedly there will be an impact – the very reason for civilization is to advance its own collective interests.

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Lawyers, Time and Hard Work

A GREAT deal has been said and written both by and about lawyers and their propensity for hard work and long hours. There are several reasons why this is so, and why it is so often mentioned.

First, a lawyer has nothing to sell but his time. This is a cliché with lots of truth. Lawyers in practice, unless it is highly specialized, have no actual product to sell; and even those who sell specific articles – mergers, title insurance, patent searches – tend to bill by the hour. There is the old story of the lawyer who arrived at Heaven's gate, having suffered a sudden stroke at the age of 35. He protested slightly to St. Peter, he was a young man in the peak of condition, all his relatives had lived into the 90s, this was obviously an error. He had had no warning, that was obviously a violation of due process. St. Peter said that was all possible, but he should remember that in Heaven they do not count the time a lawyer lives but the time that he bills.

It is estimated by major law firms that a lawyer is a top performer if he can bill for half his time. That means that even if you are among the best you have to work 80 hours a week in order to bill for 40. This leads to a habit of overtime whether motivated by honesty or greed.

The next reason for lawyer workaholicism is fear, or the desire to do his best. Every

advocate, whether in a criminal trial or an electric rate hearing, and every negotiator in a contract fight, is terrified that his opposition, or even the judge, will find some precedent or interpretation of law or facts that he hasn't found. There is no advocate of any experience to whom this has not happened. It may not have lost him a case but when it happened it raised his adrenal levels to new heights. There is always that urge to check one more case or one more fact, to stretch resources of time and money to the utmost in preparation and investigation.

The third reason is allied with the second. It is that in every trial, every hearing, or every arbitration, each time the parties submit a final decision to outside forces, they are throwing the dice. Every lawyer has lost a case he thinks he should have won. The facts were with him, the law was with him, his cause was just, but the results do not reflect this. He thinks to himself, "If only I had found that fact or studied that point more carefully." He has forgotten the warning against self-importance given to young English barristers: "85% of the cases are won on the facts, 8% are won on random or fluke, 1% are won by advocacy and 6% are lost by advocacy." He has taken the entire world on his shoulders and thinks that he is responsible for making everything come out right. The answer: work harder.

The last reason is that the quality of a lawyer's services is difficult for a layman and often even for other lawyers to judge. You can develop an excellent win-loss record by taking only easy cases. Does that make you a good lawyer? You can develop a bad record by taking all the most difficult and challenging cases. Does that make you a bad lawyer? So hard work again becomes a measure. While calm and deliberate, does he look a little haggard? Is he known to report to his desk at 7:30 a.m. sharp? Well then, with all this work he is doing, some of it may be useful.

This notion has had a particularly pernicious effect in Washington, D.C., the beehive or anthill of lawyers, where administrative appointees are often praised for starting their workday at 6 a.m. As taxpayers, we don't care whether the head of the FBI arrives at his desk at 6 a.m. or at 9 a.m. We want him to administer the Department properly, so that it catches criminals. We don't care what time of the day he does it.

There are similarities between Government and Law. You can't say that the Department of Labor, or Covington & Burling, poured 16 million tons of steel last year, or built 50,000 houses. You can tell how much money passed through their hands, but that fact alone does not show whether they are accomplishing what they set out to do.

Politics and Law are both arts, not sciences, and the best artists will have flashes of genius which seems to transcend the medium in which – and the materials with which – they are working. They will also have their failures, experiments which do not work, visions which they cannot communicate. For an artist or a politician or a lawyer, there are only two true measures, both subjective. The first is totally subjective – others' opinions. Does the viewer, the citizen, the client feel satisfied? Then this man is doing something right, either his job or his public relations. We may never know which.

There is a second, only slightly less objective than the first – posthumous opinion. Is he remembered 20, 50, 100 years after his death? What do critics and commentators think now that his whole life can be examined?

The Law is a love and an art, not a job and a science. This may be slightly disconcerting, but it's true.

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AND COMMON LAW, TOO!

As Mensa celebrates its 25th anniversary, K. Kay Shearin is celebrating her 20th as a member. By day, she's an attorney with E.F. Hutton; at night, she's the editor and publisher of *Common Law Revue* – a publication dedicated to examining the ridiculous in the world of law.

Take the exposé of the new IRS form 1040HM ("Have Mercy"), for example. You start with a "tentative tax" equal to your entire income; then, if you have the right eye color, zodiacal sign and political affiliation – and if you do a creative job on Schedule BS – you just might keep some of it.

Shearin found *real* trust instruments to be a crack-up; it was only a small step to

graduate to intentional humor – proposing malpractice insurance for the clergy (isn't "speak now or forever hold your peace" a prior restraint, in violation of the First Amendment?), running contests for the most bizarre court cases, or offering a tutorial on the various forms of feaseance for the small law office.

More "delightfully wicked satire" in the works: claim problems that might have faced Jesus' lawyer; environmental impact statements for the Ten Plagues; and on, and on.

Kay was founding editor of the Mensa newsletter *M-Blem* and a speaker at the 1984 Annual Gathering. Her interests range from English history to Star Trek. She lives in Wilmington, DE with her dogs, Tribble (pictured) and Pooka.

MORE ON

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

MARK Twain has been quoted as saying: "There are lies, *damn* lies and statistics." So I won't bother quoting statistics in support of the death penalty. To imply that one state with the death penalty on its books has a larger murder rate than another which has outlawed execution proves absolutely nothing.

The one meaningful statistic for this issue has been virtually impossible to obtain: What would the murder rate in that state have been, had the law requiring execution have been reversed – *during the same time period*?

I have followed the controversy in the *Mensa Bulletin* with intense interest, my profession being in the field of corrections. David Koblick's article in the May, 1984 issue suggested that we might have better results in selling the public on the advisability of executions if we used certain euphemisms for the term. The corrections field is currently so full of euphemisms that I feel it would be impractical to add to the list.

We no longer have "prisons"; they are *correctional facilities*. We no longer carry "night sticks" or "billy clubs," and now carry *batons*. We have completely done away with "prisoners" or "convicts," replacing them with *inmates* or *residents*. They are no longer assigned to "cells," but to *dormitories*. Nor are they kept within the confines of the correctional facility (prison) by "prison guards," but by *Correctional Officers* or *Correctional Counselors*.

The foolishness of all this is that we still have the same prisoners, kept in the same prisons and sleeping in the same cells, by the same prison guards who carry the same night sticks. The euphemistic nomenclature of these various objects and persons hasn't changed reality a bit – nor would it if applied to the death penalty.

My professional qualifications for voicing this opinion: a career in the prison and law enforcement business that began in 1955 and has extended to my current post (now held for three years) as a correctional sergeant and assistant to the warden in one of

the larger correctional facilities in the state of Alabama.

This state has recently been acclaimed as a prominent world leader in the corrections field. For the past decade it has worked its way far ahead of any other penal system, and at a much faster pace, realizing vast improvements for inmates and the public alike.

Though, as Mr. Twain asserts, the value of statistics rates a bit below lies and *damn* lies, the details of certain individual cases, however, *do* give an excellent indication of the overall picture. And they show that certain facets of the controversy have been sadly overlooked by the emotionally altruistic segment of our modern society.

I was only interested in those who made the decision *not* to kill.

I began my research of the capital punishment issue by studying inmates' records, looking for anyone who might have had to make the decision to kill or not to kill during the perpetration of his crime. I was only interested in those who made the decision *not to kill*. My goal was to discover the reasons, if possible, why they made that decision; especially since most of those who met my qualifications were convicted of their crime by the eyewitness testimony of the victim.

During the two-year period of my research, I found only 28 inmates who might fill my requirements. I sought each one out for an interview. I was working the midnight shift during this time, so it was easy to find the time to do these interviews. My reputation with the inmates for giving each individual a fair shake made my work much easier.

I conducted all of the interviews in an atmosphere of casual conversation, and I doubt if any of the inmates were aware of anything more than gabbing away the wee hours of the night. I recorded the sessions in my notebook as soon as I could find the time after the talk was completed, keeping all the names confidential.

One of the conclusions of my study is that there are two distinct fields of thinking among convicts, as criminal psychologists have long been aware. My study only further verified it: The first type, the criminal thinker, reasons that although the act he commits is clearly a violation of one criminal code or another, it is somehow right for him, because of the circumstances of his situation, and he is sure that he will not be caught. The other school is the rational thinker, who reasons that he will commit the crime, and if caught, he'll do the time.

I eliminated the criminal thinker from my study because of his belief that he can outwit the law. He does not consider the possible penalty. The rational thinker, on the other hand, though it may be a spur of the moment decision, *does* consider the probable sentence if caught. Some seem to think of it as a gamble, rationalizing that since the crime was so thoughtfully planned, the odds are in his favor; others seem to thrive on the danger of the moment. But *all* within the category of rational thinkers seem to seriously consider the penalty.

The major point in all these interviews was always this question:

"You and your victim were completely isolated. He was the *only* one who could possibly identify you if you were caught and brought to trial. If you had killed him, he couldn't have testified against you. Why didn't you shoot him? You *did* have him covered when he drew his weapon, didn't you?"

The responses to this query, not very unexpectedly, varied as little as the query itself:

COME COURTING

David E. Thomas

William Travis

"If I killed him, they'd track me down somehow, and I'd be sitting in Yellow Mama's lap (Yellow Mama is the colorful nickname inmates have bestowed on the electric chair in this state). So I let the guy take me. I only got 10 to 15 years. I'll get paroled before then, and be back out on the streets."

Of the 28 inmates interviewed, 22 gave an answer very similar to that one. The remaining six didn't shoot for reasons they didn't fully understand themselves: "I just couldn't pull that trigger."

At this correctional facility we house more than 900 convicts, about a tenth of those confined in the state. If one were to

He was the only one
who
could identify you.
Why didn't you shoot
him?

take the number of lives that I personally have discovered were saved solely because of fear of the death penalty, and were to calculate a proportionate number for the inmates in other institutions throughout the country, one might get a good indication of the number of lives that are saved just because the potential killer thinks about the variations of Yellow Mama which await him for his killing.

I leave the decision to you. Does the death penalty deter murder?

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SUPREME COURT Chief Justice Warren Burger frequently reminds us that our system of justice "may literally break down before the end of this century" and that we cannot long maintain the quality of jurisprudence we have come to expect. The federal courts have too many cases to examine; thus, he says, the problem is overcrowding.

But the problem is *not* overcrowding. The problem is that the courts are push-overs for publicity stunts. They fritter away expensive time promoting the needs of any dude who comes along with a need for newspaper coverage, either as a means of attracting contributions to his cause or, as in the case of some lawyers, to get free advertising.

Religion is perhaps the classic arena for the performer seeking court assists. One woman, who has made a fine career of complaining about the public mention of deity, is at present engaged in a campaign to rid the nation of the trashy motto, "In God we trust." Any person in the world outside the profession of law recognizes this position for what it is. Though I personally oppose prayer in the schools, I would never, *never* hush anybody up or burn his books. But I work too hard for a living to be forced to fund foolish federal fun and games and listen to the gamepieces bellyache.

If my tax money were used to benefit the stamp-out-God crowd alone, it would be one thing. But they are not alone. They instruct others in the art. During several weeks just past, a U.S. court spent time listening to an attorney in Mobile, Alabama tell why he sought \$115,000 in punitive damages from three teachers for praying in public. Is it any wonder that the courts are overcrowded? Is it any wonder that reasonable and responsible people avoid jury duty? Please note that your tax money was spent to try this frivolous suit, not because of real damage, but to seek "punitive damages." Or so we are told.

Don't give up. There is at hand a feasible, desirable and workable remedy: Require that 25% of the membership of the Supreme Court be made up of non-lawyers.

Preposterous? Why? First, without prejudice against the present Court's intent or ability, it is simply not possible for persons of virtually homogeneous training to comprehend all facets of a broad problem. Can you imagine automobiles being built entirely by molders; a bank employing only loan officers; a university faculty composed entirely of art history professors? The Court needs a *majority* background in the law, but there are others who, common sense dictates, should be contributing. Some possibilities:

1. A scientist or pharmacist, who could bring the benefit of having an ear to the public mind.
2. A college freshman English teacher, for experience in dealing with fresh, unfolding points of view.
3. A war veteran, to distinguish between that which mends and that which rends asunder. Fomenting strife has become such a popular, recognized and accepted occupation today that no one should be astounded if the Court were to order the licensing of *agents provocateur*.
4. An IRS accountant, if you want instinct at work.
5. A mother, master at dealing with the specious argument.
6. An intensive care nurse; ask her about "overwork."
7. A poet, who could put things into perspective with pragmatic comments to other Court members, such as "Pull down your robe. Your opinion is showing."

Each of these people would disdain subsidized publicity, allowing the Court to return to its original mission: deciding far-reaching issues.

How else would you spell relief? And how else could we ever hope to separate Moses from Murphy?

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THE IMMORTAL MR. HOLMES

IF Mensa were ever to elect a patron saint, I'd vote for Sherlock Holmes. Few others can match his qualifications. He is eminently intellectual, marvelously observant, articulate and pithy, fights for justice and fiercely guards his Bohemian independence.

I fell in love with the Holmes saga at the advanced age of 10. In the decades since, my fascination has broadened and deepened, but mellowed not a whit. What a piece of work is that man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! He is the most recognized of any literary character ever created. More movies have been made of his adventures, more literary criticisms and reference books have been devoted to him, than to any other creation that lived between the covers of a book.

Many people believe that he *is* real! Letters still come to him at 221-B Baker Street. With the exception of Santa Claus, a folkloric hero, what fictional character receives letters from real people? Hamlet at Castle Elsinore, Dracula in Romania, Frankenstein in Germany, Poirot in Belgium – none receives visits from the postman.

When Doyle, tiring of Holmes, "killed" him in 1893, the writer was subjected to hate mail and picketers in front of his home, calling him a murderer. London stockbrokers wore black armbands to express their sorrow. What other hero ever evoked such emotion?

To millions, Holmes is both real and immortal. And yet the Holmes saga began less than a century ago in 1887 when Doyle, after countless rejections, succeeded at last in publishing the first story, *A Study in Scarlet*.

The continuing immortalization/canonization of Holmes was helped greatly by a new genre of stories begun by Nicholas Meyer, in which Holmes is now teamed up with historical people. In Meyer's *The Seven Percent Solution*, Holmes, the stalker of the criminal, joins forces with Freud, the sleuth of the unconscious. Together these two great minds prevent the outbreak of a major war.

Other novelists eagerly picked up the theme. In *(Prisoner of the Devil)* Holmes comes to the aid of Alfred Dreyfuss, who was convicted of espionage in France in the 1890s against a backdrop of massive and virulent anti-Semitism. Similarly, in a string of other post-Doyle novels, Holmes goes on the track of Jack the Ripper, helps Teddy Roosevelt solve a murder, rescues the kidnapped daughter of Karl Marx, encounters Lenin and the Bolsheviks . . . even tackles the search for the killer of JFK. Holmes is now a historical fixture!

How much more real could Holmes become? Well, a real historical personage needs a biography. In fact, several biographies have appeared chronicling Holmes' life outside of the information given in Doyle's 60 stories. My paperback copy of Vincent Starrett's *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* even carries the classification "non-fiction biography" on the spine. I know of no other fictional character who can equal this.

What is it, then, that makes Holmes so real, so immortal, so unflaggingly popular? I submit that there are three contributory factors:

1. The habits and paraphernalia of Holmes – his passion for justice, his defense of the underdog, his omniscience, his epigrammatic observations, his love of music . . . even his drug-taking to ward off ennui; and of course his pipe, magnifying glass, deerstalker, and Inverness. All these touches turn him from an intellectual abstraction into a very human quantity.

Letters still come
to him at
221-B Baker Street.

2. The plots – damsels in distress, innocent victims hounded by the ever-obtuse Inspector Lestrade. Holmes makes sense of clues where officialdom can't even see them. Holmes can unravel the most insoluble of puzzles;



TELEVISION'S CRIMINAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Al Greengold

no problem is ever beyond his ken. Holmes' dressing-down of prime ministers, lords, ladies and self-important nobodies brings joy to the anarchist in all of us. And who could not but love the implacable and fearless detective as he grimly pursues the ghostly but deadly Hound of the Baskervilles across the wild and desolate Grimpen Mire?

3. The evocation of a "golden age" long gone, but never to be forgotten: Victorian London. The world of hansom cabs, ladies in bustles, men in starched collars. A time of parasols, gold pocket watches, scientific rationalism, dastardly villains and earnestness. An era of butlers, maids, and cigars and brandy in the study. The epoch of modest and reluctant heroes with justice always triumphant.

Against the pains and stresses of our irrational and volatile world, Holmes proves an excellent anodyne. He is Victorian heroism epitomized. He is the sword of justice, the avenger of the wronged, protector of the victimized, the Court of Last Appeal. He is St. George forever slaying the dragon.

Gaslights beckon to us eerily through the London fog. The horses clip-clop, clip-clop on the cobblestones. The mustachioed bobby walks with his slow and measured tread. And above it all a welcome light always blazes forth upstairs at 221-B Baker Street. The loyal Watson sits before the reassuring warmth of the Victorian hearth, writing up the latest case. Holmes strolls about the room playing introspectively on his Stradivarius.

And we, fortunate ones that we are, have a standing invitation to join them and rediscover that secret chamber of the heart where we never grow up and it is always 1895.

Al Greengold
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Rahway, NJ 07065

A TWO-DIMENSIONAL animated picture accompanied by sound emanates from the electronic box across the room from me. It provides me with a technological window to the world, complete with high-fidelity sound and color.

Yet despite the technological advances of this industry, the two-dimensional picture from this magic device all too often communicates only one-dimensional concepts — which, bombarded upon the collective human consciousness, make for predispositions, pre-determined attitudes, and prejudices within that collective consciousness.

This magic device
all too often
communicates only
one-dimensional
concepts.

Our prejudices are conveyed and perpetuated in many ways and by many means. Biased editorial policies in the news media, and racial and sexual stereotypes in comedy and drama have at least been addressed by various segments of our society. But among the most insidious and least acknowledged of such stereotypes is the portrayal of criminals in police-crime dramas.

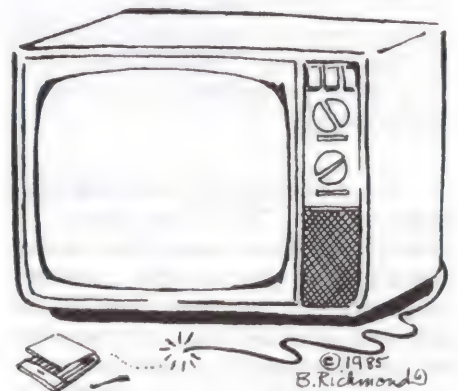
While many modern police dramas have become sensitive to the plight of police officers (which is as it should be), very seldom are the dynamics of the criminal explored. The common portrayal of the "criminal" is of a totally depraved sociopath with absolutely no redeeming value to society. There may be a few such individuals, but an enlightened society must realize that there are social pressures, economic factors, and societal inequities which contribute significantly to criminality.

Rev. Stephen C. Jordan

Occasionally a television movie may address this issue with some small degree of compassion, but the weekly fare served up to our eyes and ears fails miserably to address these concerns. Furthermore, awareness of them may make the middle-class viewer uncomfortable; so, by serving its largest constituency through the means of the lowest common denominator, television avoids the "uncomfortable" issues — and daily reinforces the criminal stereotype.

Society would be better served by correcting those cultural inequities which cause or contribute to criminal behavior than by vilifying society's victims. If television is to serve a valuable purpose in our society, it must communicate, not flimsy counterfeits of life, but the *realities* of society to our collective consciousness.

Rev. Stephen C. Jordan
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Fort Payne, AL 35967



SIC SEMPER TELEVISIONS!

THE VACUUM

IN THE TUBE

**Amalgamated Broadcasting Network
Interoffice Communication
RE: Series pilots**

Our conceptualization staff has submitted a bumper crop of new, high-concept proposals for the upcoming fall season. Among the most promising are these examples:

"Let's Make a Plea-Bargain" – This one combines the best aspects of game shows and courtroom simulations. A real, genuine accused criminal person is given the chance to risk it all; host Skip Winkington, assisted by a couple of attractive, mind-free young ladies, offers the alleged criminal a variety of doors, curtains and boxes, behind or within which are such items as:

A Total Acquittal! A Reduction in Charges!! A Suspended Sentence!! Or – uh-oh – An All-Expense-Paid Lifetime Vacation at Beautiful Club Fed in Scenic Leavenworth, Kansas!!!

Once a month the stakes are even higher, as semi-finalists compete – under compulsion, of course – for a seat in the CHAMBER OF DOOM!! This is the ultimate trip; the winner's method of execution is decided by the studio audience. Needless to say, any of these prizes may be awarded only once to any contestant.

Two long shots which, although risky, might catch on: "Kiddie-Porn Squad," in which police officers, assigned to the day-care beat, raid nurseries, frisk grandmas, and strip-search babysitters; and "Bernie Gets Even," the exploits of a mild-mannered nebbish who undergoes superhero transformation and becomes Vigilante-Man. In this guise he roams the streets, righting wrongs and ridding society of conspicuously non-white persons, suspicious-looking panhandlers, possibly dangerous bag ladies, parking violators, and other wretched refuse.

Jean MacKay Jackson

Other proposals include:

"Watergate Down," a "Hill Street" type show which gives new meaning to the catchphrase, "Okay, you guys, be careful out there). . .

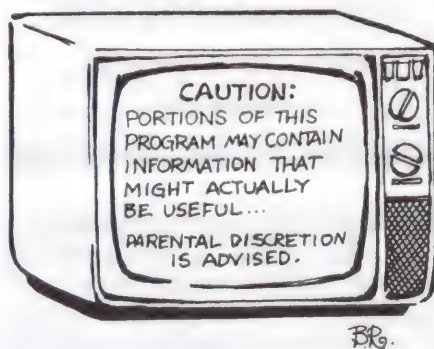
"One is Self-Abuse," a sequel to "Three's Company" and "Two's a Crowd". . .

"Ted Turner Takes Over," about which the less said the better. . .

"Gunfight of the Network Stars," which will enable us to eliminate has-been hunks and starlets. . .

"Blow-Ups, Blips, and Nuclear Holocaust," a one-shot show not yet firmly scheduled . . .

. . . and an action miniseries based on the Spanish Inquisition, "High Torquemada."



Made-for-TV movies underway range from wholesome fare such as "The Cabbage Patch Kids and the Lawnmower" to "The Jack the Ripper Story," told from a point of view sympathetic to that misunderstood man-about-town.

Unfortunately, this full schedule leaves no room for long-planned shows like "The Laurence Olivier Theatre Hour," or "The Adventures of Bertrand Russell," and "That's Existentialism!" Maybe next year. . .

**Jean MacKay Jackson
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MEDIA

Frank B. Dopp, Jr.

I SOMETIMES think we are too well-informed. Maybe we get so much information that even the best brain cannot process it. For tens of thousands of years we got by with only local information, and even that was incomplete. Consequently, groups prospered or failed according to events that may have been beyond their cognizance.

Even so, the truly great breakthroughs in human betterment came about under these conditions – the use of fire, the development of the wheel, metallurgy and agriculture. A mind distracted by the exigencies of the immediate could not have concentrated long enough to have produced these brilliant, necessary inventions. The mundane needed to be set aside before the sublime could surface. So too today. If we cannot protect ourselves from the needless intrusion of useless information, it is doubtful if any of us can use the human brain at its maximum potential.

At any time there are a myriad bits of information that do not penetrate our consciousness: radiation from outer or inner space, germs and viruses invading our bodies, ultrasonic noises, etc. Unless we are specialists, none of these penetrate our awareness. Why should they? All are taken care of by the subconscious.

By the same token – unless we are leaders of states, generals, economic advisors, political strategists, etc. – why should we even care about events in these specialized fields? Will sociopolitical news make us better husbands, wives, truck drivers, accountants, clerks, friends, parents, children? News that uplifts, encourages, or at least amuses the average person can do no harm. Anything else is, if not detrimental, at least worthless.

**Frank B. Dopp, Jr.
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M-AGES

OMBUDSMAN'S REPORT

Vernon K. Schumann

THE kind of complaint most frequently made during the past year was against local or national Mensa editors. A number of would-be contributors, including writers of "Letters to the Editor" whose offerings were rejected, have charged editors with exceeding their authority. Almost without exception, these complaints have asserted that Mensa editors may not exercise traditional prerogatives, that Mensa publications are forums and everything submitted by members must be published.

Some complaints of irregularities in local group elections were received. In one case, although no fraud was committed or intended, violations of published election procedures were substantial, with the possibility of a resultant false vote count. The Ombudsman's opinion was that the election was invalid. The Election Committee ordered an immediate rebalot. A mutual misunderstanding among the parties concerned was found to be the problem in another complaint. A third was referred to the local Election Committee.

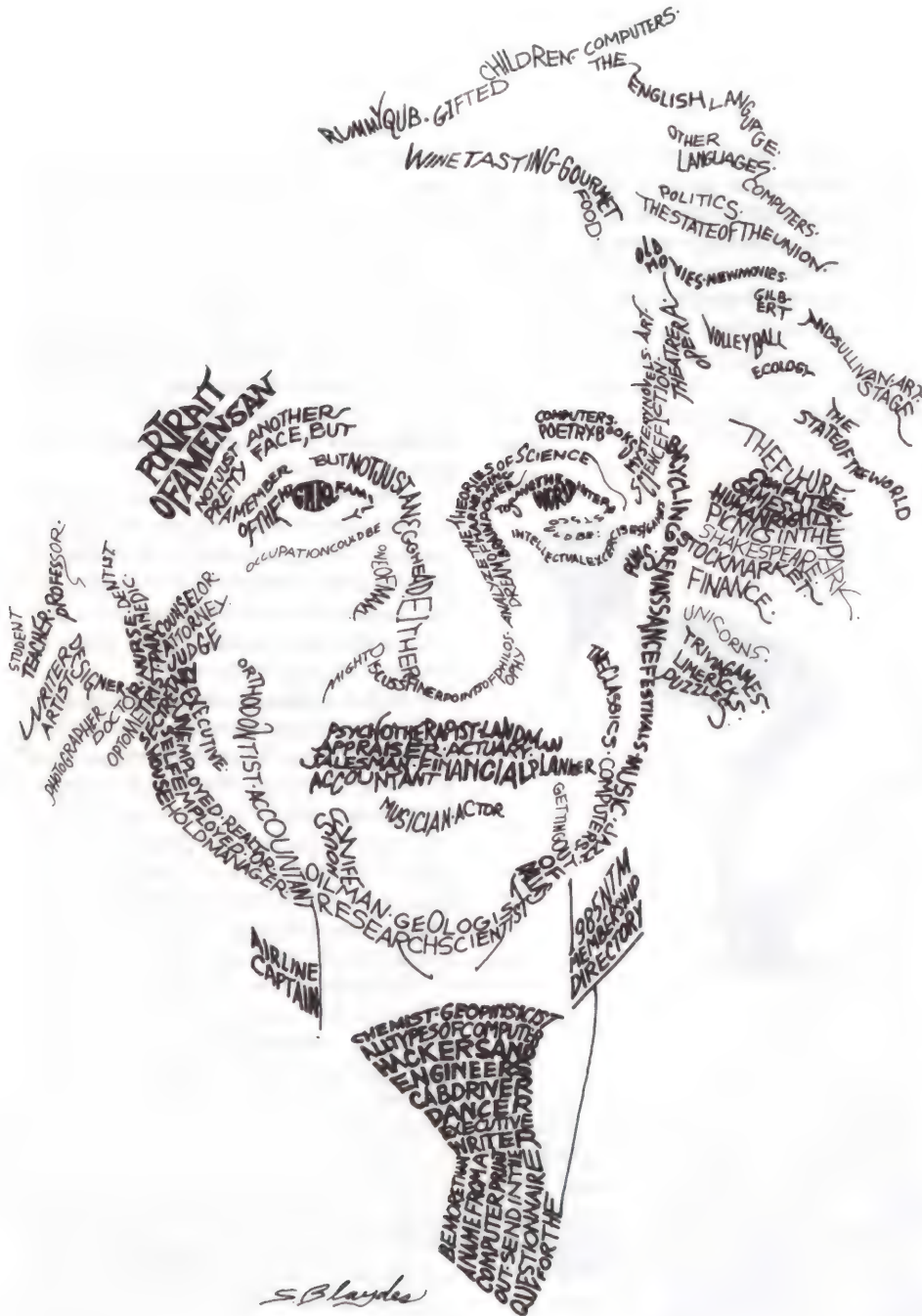
Two disturbing trends became apparent: First, frequent threats to take legal action against an individual, a group or Mensa itself if the complainants' demands are not met; second, frequent charges of libel based on misunderstanding or loose interpretations of its meaning.

The Disputes Resolution Committee has completed a final draft of a Bylaws Amendment permitting Regional Hearings Committees. This will be submitted with an accompanying *Memorandum of Rules and Procedures for Regional Hearings* to the AMC at its next meeting.

Vernon K. Schumann
Ombudsman

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Art by Sondra Blaydes, reprinted from *M-Aura*.

CRUISE OF THE SKORPIOS

THE dream of an immigrant Greek fisherman's son has been turned into a dream of a cruise aboard the motorship *Skorpios*, to the bottom of Chile and its awesome *ventisquero* (glacier) and the icebergs in Laguna San Rafael.

Captain Constantine Kochifas is the builder of both the dream and his 75-passenger pet, which was making its 205th cruise last February in the middle of the Chilean summer.

She sails out of Puerto Montt, a seaport and industrial town of 100,000 which serves as home base for tourism in Chile's fabled Lakes Region. It's a 1½-hour flight south from the capital, Santiago, on the national airline, Lan Chile.

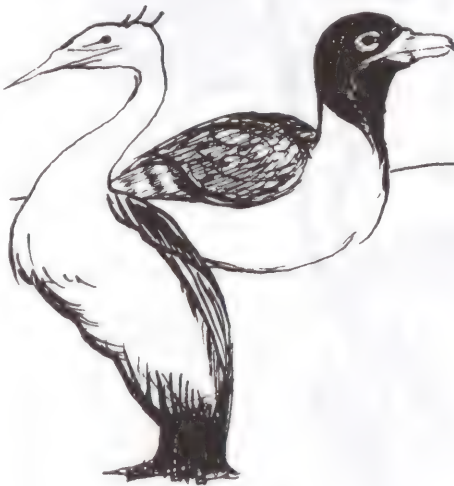
After the first meal, passengers begin asking for the recipes. The requests will continue throughout the journey, but few will be able to duplicate the ingredients. Lunch is pulled from the sea the previous evening; dinner may have been a school of fish or colony of shellfish a few hours earlier. Chef Mimi (Mrs. Kochifas) has a Chilean way with just-caught oysters, mussels, clams, sea urchins, and the bass-like robalo — many of which come together in the native feast, *curanto*. Mealtime cheer is augmented by unlimited table wines, 250 to 300 bottles for the six-day voyage.

"Weather this far south is always variable," the captain comments as *Skorpios* threads her way through the thousands of islands of the Chiloé Archipelago. A variety of sprinkles, sun showers and downpours bears him out; after a mild crossing of the Gulf of Corcovado, the sea surface remains smooth throughout.

A Kochifas contraption and a natural wonder come together when *Skorpios* needs water. Through eerie darkness in a mist fighting to become a deluge, Captain K. pinpoints the precise 100-foot span of waterfall to provide it. This is no trickling bridal veil variety; it's a 200-foot tumble with enough guts to make a lot of hydroelectricity.

With the precision of a forklift spearing a pallet, *el capitán* eases the prow right up

to the rocky base of the falls. Two crewmen juggle a jerry-rigged stainless steel funnel-and-trough apparatus into position midway up the water drop and connect the ship's end to the storage tank. In 30 minutes, 45 tons of "the world's purest water" is aboard and *Skorpios* is off into the night.



Passengers awake on the second morning to the thundering crack of ice breaking off the glacier into Laguna San Rafael. The awesome sight before them is the oceanic terminus of nearly 10 miles of frozen river, still a mile wide after eons of erosion from sun, wind and old age. The meaning of "ice blue" comes vibrantly alive.

Twelve to a dinghy, passengers marvel as experienced ship's tillermen maneuver around the biggest bergs and among the smaller ones . . . an exhilarating sensation as the boats nudge aside the moderate chunks, but are occasionally slowed when obstacles are too big or too numerous. All

the senses get into the act; the landlubbers love the glacier's façade — the symmetries, the naturally sculpted ice designs: a horse's head, a Scottie dog . . . or a giant blob.

After an hour of filming and gawking, the sun breaks out. So does a secret cache. The captain has equipped each boat with a bottle of scotch and a glass apiece inscribed "Souvenir of the Laguna Trip." There's plenty of ice within arm's reach for the scotch-on-the-rocks that toasts the discovery of this exotic marvel.

Before she weighs anchor, *Skorpios* loads up on ice of her own for refrigeration and bar. Two sailors take to a dinghy and cast about for a likely chunk of iceberg. In a few minutes they've netted a ¾-ton prize and are hoisting it aboard. Twice more, and *Skorpios* has ice for the week.

Northbound now, she sails overnight to the Kochifas properties at the head of a fjord called Quitalco. For now, the main feature is the waters of a spa which Kochifas taps at 200° to pipe into a 200-foot-long bathhouse with two 60-foot-square pools of thermal waters, hot and less hot. Propoganda says that an hour in the waters produces a five-years-younger appearance; even if it's unproved, most passengers give it a try.

Dinghies get another workout as half a day is devoted to exploration of the magnificent fjord and hundreds of verdant islands. "Just like Norway," someone comments. "Better!" yells another. "Reminds me of the U.S. Northwest." "More like northern Canada," the admirers carry on.

At Quitalco the captain puts out two sailors with a net. In a couple of hours, these experienced hands are hauling aboard some 800 pounds of robalo for a lunch, a dinner and the remainder to be smoked. What he saves on free seafood, water and ice, the captain splurges on a continuous free open bar and the non-stop table wines.

Queilen is a little fishing town of 1,500 where American passengers are impressed with fence-to-fence gardens sporting giant dahlias. Some are so smitten with the basketball-size cabbage heads that they in-

There's plenty of ice
within arm's reach for the
scotch-on-the-rocks
toast.

vest a few pesos in a packet of last year's seeds. Good luck!

Final call is Castro, a town of 100,000 hanging from a hillside on "the big island" of Chiloé. Central market is the attraction, where heavy, thick hand-knit wool sweaters reach their best prices. Long-sleeved and patterned, they go for \$10 to \$15. All-wool, hand-made ski hats are 60¢. It takes an artisan 20 minutes to fabricate one; if there's time, she'll make a hat or sweater to measure.

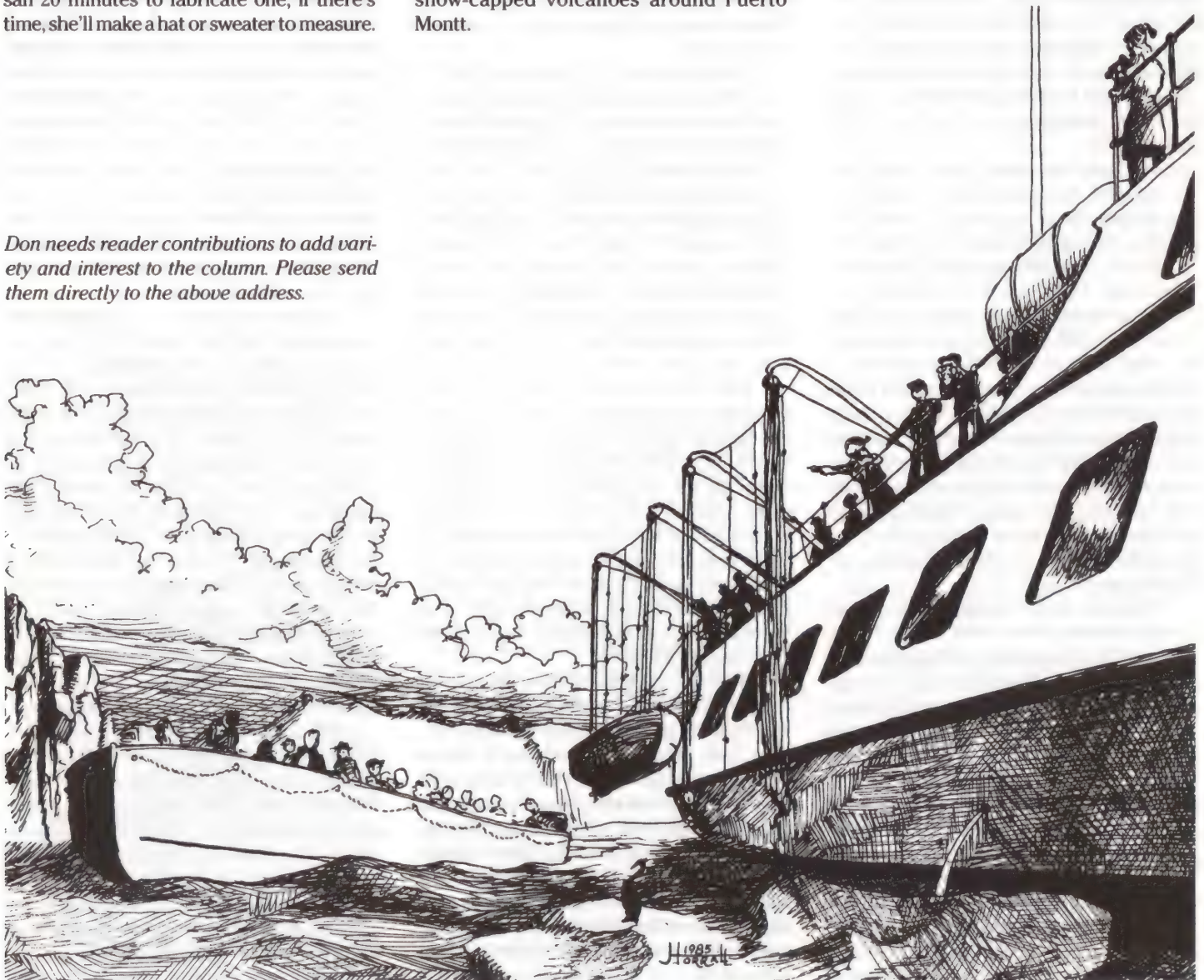
Early arrivals may enjoy a night aboard Skorpions before sailing. Santiago warrants a visit before or after the cruise. The capital is a maze of shoppers' arcades called *galerias*, where Hotel Galerías is central to all of them, and includes breakfast in its reasonable prices.

There are a dozen day trips – and longer ones – to visit the beautiful lakes and snow-capped volcanoes around Puerto Montt.

Reservations can be booked through Travcoa (800/992-2005). Lan Chile (800/225-5526) provides good service from New York and Miami, and daily flights from Santiago to Puerto Montt.

Don Bonhaus
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Don needs reader contributions to add variety and interest to the column. Please send them directly to the above address.



BOOKS IN BRIEF:

The Gift that Keeps Giving

Margot Seitelman

AMERICA the beautiful is celebrated in *The Wilder Shore*, photographs by Morley Baer, text by David Rains Wallace and foreword by Wallace Stegner; 176 pp., \$50, distributed by Random House, New York, New York. This is a Sierra Club Exhibit Format Book, 10-3/16" x 13-7/16", with 35 color photographs, 40 black-and-white photographs printed in duotone, an appendix of photographer's notes, a bibliography, and an index. It is a magnificent tribute to California, its landscapes and its legends. The photographs are in the genre of Ansel Adams, the vivid text enhances them by conveying verbal pictures, and the effect is breathtaking.

Art, not with brush and palette, but through the camera's unfailing eye, does not imitate life, it captures it. *Man With Camera: Photographs From Seven Decades*, by Felix H. Man; 280 pp., \$29.95, Schocken Books, New York, New York, is superb documentary of this century. Starting with the trenches of WWI, the photojournalist author proceeds to present the whole panoply of historic, political and social changes of the ensuing decades. The actors in this panorama are kings and queens, creative geniuses and international power-brokers, artists and actors. The accompanying text is the author's personal diary, describing the people and the circumstances of the pictures; it provides valuable insights and acute observations.

Cinema in its heyday is vividly recreated in *Niven's Hollywood*, by Tom Hutchinson, with introduction by Peter Ustinov and afterword by David Niven, Jr.; 212 pp., \$17.95, Salem House, distributed by Merrimack Publisher's Circle, Salem, New Hampshire. This is a big book, 8¾" x 10¾", with 253 black-and-white photographs; it offers an engaging look at the greats and the near-greats of the era, seen in the context of one man's career and life there.

Eternal city, thy name is *Rome: Mirror of the Centuries*, by Paolo Marton; 252 pp., \$50, The Vendome Press, distributed by The Viking Press, New York, New York. For anyone who has ever been to Rome, and for all

who have ever dreamed of going to Rome, this is a *must*. There are 216 glorious color photographs of the familiar sights viewed in a fresh way, of the hitherto hidden delights now revealed, and of the historic splendor extolled again. The text is minimal; it explains and supports the photographs, but does not intrude on them. The 13½" x 9" size allows adequate range and scope for this photographer's flawless artistry. This book is a joy to the eye and the soul; it satisfies both.

Food is not only the sustenance of life, it can be an art and an exhilaration, as exemplified in *Lee Bailey's City Food: Recipes for Good Food and Easy Living*, photographs by Joshua Green; 157 pp., \$18.95, Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., Publishers, distributed by Crown Publishers, Inc., New York, New York. There are menus and recipes for lunches, dinners, picnics, and special occasions. There are beautiful photographs of the food and of the settings in which it is served. There is a light text that connects it all and, *voilà*, you have a readable feast. Enjoy, enjoy!

Intelligence is at the heart of Mensa. Its origin is explained in *The Brain*, by Richard Restak, M.D.; 371 pp., \$24.95, Bantam Books, New York, New York. The book is based on the PBS television series of the same name. It is lucidly written, reveals a good many of the mysterious workings of the human brain, and manages to avoid pedantry throughout. It teaches without boring, it illuminates without strain, it supplies information without redundancy. Buy two and give one to a friend!

Kids will continue to love *The Story of Babar, the Little Elephant*, by Jean de Brunhoff; 48 pp., \$12.95, Random House, Inc., New York, New York – and they'll love it even more in this large, 10¾" x 12¾" edition. Young Mensa-kids, from five to eight, will enjoy *The Pain and the Great One*, by Judy Blume; illustrated by Irene Trivas; \$10.95, Bradbury Press, Scarsdale, New York, especially if they are boys (the great one) who have an older sister (the pain). Mensa-kids of all ages will want *More Hugs!* by Dave Ross; \$6.95, T. Y. Crowell Books, New York,

New York, because it lists dozens of new reasons for such hug-variants as cuddles, snuggles, and nuzzles.

Life is a miracle explained in *The Facts of Life*, by Jonathan Miller and David Pelham; \$18.95, Viking Penguin, Inc., New York, New York. A remarkable sequel to its equally remarkable predecessor, *The Human Body*, this is another beautifully engineered pop-up book, providing moveable presentations of the development of a fertilized egg, and tracing the baby, as it grows week by week, to the moment of its birth. This fascinating volume will appeal to all ages, from preschooler to senior citizen.

Literature has produced few epics to equal *Tirant Lo Blanc*, by Joanot Martorell and Marti Joan de Calba, translated and with a critical essay by David H. Rosenthal; 576 pp., \$21.95, Schocken Books, New York, New York. This Renaissance classic, a Catalan novel of chivalry, takes place 500 years ago, and follows its hero's adventures in love, peace, politics and war. The translation shows sensitivity and a superb understanding of the nuances of the original language; all of the subtleties have been preserved, yet none of the flow of words or actions has been sacrificed. Cervantes singled out *Tirant Lo Blanc* for rare praise in his own masterpiece, *Don Quixote*; the centuries have not given his words the lie.

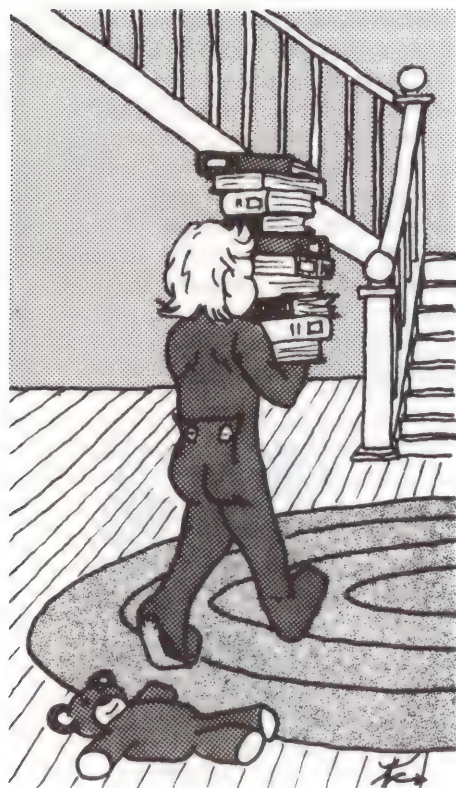
The Orient need not be inscrutable, as demonstrated in *The House of Nire*, by Morio Kita, translated by Dennis Keene; 519 pp., \$16.95, Kodansha International, New York, New York. In this autobiographic fiction, the author tells the story of the Nire family, a somewhat madcap group, from the end of WWI to the end of WWII. We share their experience of the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923, their participation in Japan's democratic years of the '20s, and the effect on their lives of Japan's rising tide of militarism that led to the attack on Pearl Harbor. A mixture of existential philosophy and pragmatic realism, the novel offers an unusual and honest insight into a culture the West has only seen through a cloudy looking-glass.

Pizza is almost everyone's favorite food. Snobs deny its appeal and surreptitiously send out for it. Nutritionists lump it with junk food, but when pressed, admit that it offers a remarkably balanced nutritional value. Only children continue unabashed in their love for it. Finally, here is much overdue recognition. *The Pizza Book: Everything There Is to Know About the World's Greatest Pie*, by Evelyne Slomon; 276 pp., \$14.95, Times Books, New York, New York, offers

more than 200 recipes that can be made at home. No special equipment is necessary; all that is needed is a home oven, a bowl, a pan, and a good pair of hands. From *Torta Rustica* to *Pizza Provençale*, from Baker's *Focaccia* to *Savory Goat Cheese and Onion Calzone*, this book has it all, and even includes a recipe for a 30-minute pizza. *Mange, mange!*

Science and I have always had an uneasy relationship. Afraid that I wouldn't understand it, or that it would bore me if I did, I shied away from books on the subject for years. But *The Sacred Beetle and Other Great Essays in Science*, edited by Martin Gardner; 427 pp., \$22.95, Prometheus Books, Buffalo, New York, has made a convert of me. Containing essays by the finest Western science writers, from Asimov to Russell, from Freud to Sagan, from Darwin to Wells, the book offers a brilliant array of stimulating pieces that have something to say and say it superbly well. A book to keep by the bedside or the hearth, to turn to often, and to savor each time.

Margot Seitelman
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Brooklyn, NY 11223



BOOKS BY MENSANS

Robert Schwartz

Hagelstein, Carol, *Mayan Rulers: A Catalogue*, published by LaRoc Atelier, P.O. Box 602, Reseda, CA 91335, \$13.90 (CA residents add \$.90 tax) pb, 134 pp. A careful compilation of over 100 rulers from 23 sites, identified in the last 25 years. Where possible, the listing includes the ruler's name and alternate names, his glyphic name, dates of birth, accession and death, and other information. Includes charts, bibliography and index. Available by mail order; allow four weeks for delivery.

Jacober, Robert, *How to Become A Successful Salesman Without Even Trying*, published by the author, 7341 SW 64 Ct, Miami, FL 33143, \$10.00 pb, 92 pp. An excellent guide for beginning salespeople, and people who wish to open any business. It also has an extensive list of "how to's" for improving sales for experienced salespeople. Author's main goal is to show readers how to be happy while attaining success in sales, or business, or both! Without sales there is no business.

Perrin, Carl, *Subject Meets Verb*, published by the author, 42 Bridgton Rd, Westbrook, ME 04092, \$6.00 (postpaid) pb, 78 pp. Written for use in college freshman English classes, but it can be helpful for anyone who wants to learn to write better sentences. The first section explains in clear, simple language the structure of the English sentence. The second section takes an analytical approach to sentence problems, particularly problems of sentence structure. The final section gives instructions on writing effective sentences.

Pitrone, Jean, *Jean Hoxie: The Robin Hood of Tennis*, published by Avenue Publishing Co. 9417 Conant, Hamtramck, MI 48212, ISBN 0-910977-01-1, \$11.95 hb, 130 pp. This bibliography of Jean Hoxie and her unique tennis program contains photos, index and preface by Gladys Heldman, former publisher of *World Tennis* magazine. Hoxie Tennis House was a "first": Hoxie "Kids" dominated

Junior tennis for over two decades. In Hoxie's world-wide travels, she conducted tennis clinics in Europe, Asia and South America. Her fascinating life traces the history of tennis.

Stallings, William, *Computer Communications: Architectures, Protocols, and Standards*, published by IEEE Computer Society Press, 1109 Spring St, Silver Spring, MD 20910, ISBN 0-8186-0604-5, \$39.00 pb, 487 pp. Consists of original material plus reprints of 31 key papers on communications architectures and protocols. The book surveys ongoing work on standardization and implementation. The emphasis is on the actual architecture and protocols being developed. Topics include OSI, ARPANET, physical, link, network, internetwork, transport, session, presentation and application. An annotated bibliography and glossary are included.

vos Savant, Marilyn, *OMNI IQ Quiz Contest*, published by McGraw-Hill, 1221 Ave of the Americas, NY, NY 10020, ISBN 0-07-039377-X, \$9.95 pb, 180 pp. Designed to help the reader increase his or her IQ store with specific information and instructions on how to go about mastering the various types of questions, presented with dozens of pages of entertaining quizzes and an actual, full-length IQ test with answers, all against the background excitement of an intelligence contest with a grand prize of \$10,000 in cash plus other prizes.

Correction: Ronald Eisenberg's book *Veterans' Compensation: An American Scandal*, reviewed in the March *Bulletin*, is priced at \$5.95, not \$55.95.

Robert Schwartz
12 Governor Endicott Rd
Billerica, MA 01821

Please enclosed SASE and request one form for each book to be considered. Books will be listed once and at the Editor's discretion.

On Good Intentions

WE have been fortunate in receiving some excellent villanelles during the past several years, and perhaps a distant analogy can be conceived between this very difficult poetic form and the usual ubiquitous New Year's resolutions: both are well-intentioned, difficult to bring off, and complex in scope.

Mechanically, the villanelle is a poem of 19 lines consisting of five tercets followed by a quatrain. Now, since only *two* rhyme schemes are allowed, lines one, six, and twelve and eighteen are identical, as is also the case with lines three, nine, fifteen and nineteen. One gets therefore an effect of eight lines constituting a refrain, a marvelously difficult feat. Observe the following effort from a hard-working M in Vienna, Austria:

Although they leave their living with regret,
I do not think the dead remember long,
For, after all, the living soon forget.

Earth-bound, our egos want their souls to fret
Dim bright dimensions where they now
belong.

Although they leave their living with regret,

Earth-roots are snapped, strange entelechies
met;

They do not sigh among that cosmic throng,
But, after all, the living soon forget.

With all eternity before them set,
This brevity is ephemeral as song.
Although they leave their living with regret,

On flower-decked graves that emphasize the
debt

Of unpaid days, only the stones are strong,
For, after all, the living soon forget.

So mourn their going for a little, yet
To expect their minds to hover must be
wrong,

Although they leave their living with regret,
But after all the living soon forget.

Pauline Pedersen
Vienna, Austria

Frau Pedersen's poem is technically excellent in iambic pentameter, withal the essential single sounding of "flower" in line thirteen. Note the internal alliterations, including "earthbound . . . egos," "snapped, strange entelechies," "stones . . . strong," and "leave . . . living." Also, lines three, nine, fifteen, and nineteen alternate between prepositions and conjunctions, although this is permissible in villanelle form. Congratulations, Frau Pedersen, and I invite more submissions from European Ms.



Somehow we have all reached the crest of 1985. There are but 15 years remaining until the millenium. Few individuals ever live to experience the end of a century; how many out of the human host see the end and the beginning of a thousand-year cycle? Consider yourselves immensely privileged to witness an event of destiny which is both frightening and inspiring.

A thousand years ago, Saxon England still slumbered before the Norman Conquest, Europe narrowly escaped becoming Moslem, and Shakespeare, Milton and Dante were but stardust unformed. We mourn the death of good King Harold at Hastings in 1066, yet without that disaster, the amalgamated races and cultures could not have produced Master Shakespeare at Stratford in 1564. Who is the universal weaver of time?

THE WEAVER

Her needle creeps between the warp
trailing a crimson spoor
and paints twin nebulae
flaming across the wooden loom.

White handspun from Welsh sheep
Tattoos the oval galaxy.

Finished now with ruby wool and
textured dark
and tied with knots against the black,
her fingers firm the fabric of the
universe.

The webs recapture memories of her
guild
and how Arachne worked her heddles,
formed her woolen stars
and scorned Penelope
who sat unraveling her days.

Myra Stahl
Deerfield, IL

(Published by permission of *The Willow Review*, College of Lake County, Grays Lake, Illinois.)

Poets must observe with both ends of the lens; they see the microcosm as well as the macrocosm, hopefully, but at which side of the time warp? Gentle Will tells us, "life is a tale told by an idiot . . ." and the Persian tentmaker wistfully desires to know "who is the potter, and who the pot?" Our futuristic intentions, our dreams, hopes and desires, may appear monumental only to our perspective. Yet Halley's Comet is returning after 75 years, and we ought to sense the presence of other perspectives. There operates a strange relativity in awareness of all living things, and intentions are rarely consummated:





ASTRONAUT

Raccoon, you worshipped something
much too close last night.

I've heard of washing rituals when you
feed,
and of racial memory,
a giant coon with strobe-hot eyes
that mutters, "Come put your forefeet
on the asphalt
sniff the alien reek
and feel the rush of wind
upon your black-ringed fur.
Come celebrate the light."

Twin lasers cut the night into lunar arcs.
The exploration ends.

What hunger did this other world
excite?
And did you know the shiny juggernaut
that
left you crushed along its careless path?

Myra Stahl

Ms. Stahl's poem constitutes an extensive experience, not only for its parallel imageries following the didactic opening line, but for the impassive insights it provides into human pretensions. Mayhap Halley's Comet and strobe headlights are both a nemesis; it's all relative to one's perspective.

Human culture possesses good intentions. So did Lot's wife. *Via trita, via tuta* — the beaten path is the safe path, and new beginnings are invariably washed out in the blandness of habit. We humans place our forefeet on the celestial asphalt with good intentions about cosmic star wars defense systems, but do we ever contemplate what our strobe headlights may be? If the inten-

tions be peaceful, what is the road? The tropics are so peaceful this new year.

WAR BY PROXY

When the mug and black steam coffee
Fell upon his fat and bathrobed lap,
Sections of his Sunday paper
Leaped, and landed like exploding men.

Chronicles of death last Friday
Crumpled under panicked, strafing feet.
Then his wife in full control, snapped
"Take a shower. Call an ambulance."

The tortured cleric on page nine
Of section B (not a communist
he claimed), told of campesinos'

Pleas for prayers, pleas for
comprehension.

Pleas unread, with coffee grounds and
eggshells,
Stuff aside to tidy for the volunteers.

Daniel B. Hahn
Albany, NY

But can we be bothered by all these difficulties? I mean, really. Easier to maintain course. *Via trita, via tuta*. Why don't they just keep growing coffee down there and relax? Of course, we're sorry about the Ethiopians too, but, well ... at least our intentions were good.

... I cannot blame the world I see
in all its vexing mystery.
When it all is said and done
I know that I'm the only one
who can set me free
from my ultimate nemesis —

me.

Mary Prior
San Antonio, TX

We have met the enemy and it is us. If only those resolutions were kept collectively. Honorable mention to Russell Saint-Damian and Bruce Price.

Dr. K.S. Kynell
P.O. Box 699
Marquette, MI 49855

DEATHS

David Ethan Currier	Yuba City, CA
David L. Hersh	Glendale, CA
Harold Huber	Dearborn, MI
Russell S. Mattim Knudson	Macomb, IL
Paul Vincent Porter	Irvine, CA
Albert J. Russo	Carlsbad, CA
Graham Bill Stiles	Spring, TX
Jean Vartanian	Harper Woods, MI
Lyle S. Wallace	Syracuse, NY

Obituary

I am saddened to report the death, on April 10, 1985, of Alfred Rubinstein (of 129 Eighth St, Hicksville, NY 11801). He was 63 years old and is survived by his widow, Miriam, his son Jack and daughter Judy, and the latter's son Louis, his only grandson.

Al was an attorney, graduate of the Brooklyn Law School. He was American Mensa's first Legal Counsel, first Treasurer, and author of the American Mensa By-Laws that have served the society so well for more than 20 years. After many years in private practice, he joined the staff of the New York State Tax Commissioner, first in Albany and then in New York, until illness forced him to retire a few years back.

I first met Al very shortly after starting my work for American Mensa, when the monthly publication, which then was shipped from England, was impounded by U.S. Customs as being unfit for American consumption. Quoting the appropriate amendments, Al obtained the release of the newsletters and we never discovered what was supposed to have been so objectionable in them.

Throughout, Al was an active and interested Mensan. He read the *Mensa Bulletin* carefully, responding from time to time to articles and letters. He was always available for legal counsel or historical perspective.

Al had a ready wit, a keen sense of the ridiculous, and a deep love for the English language. He was a generous and warm host; many of the early Mensa parties, in the New York area, took place in his and Miriam's home. Their barbecues were as luscious as their swimming pool was inviting; they were fun to be with and made one feel at home.

His wife, Miriam, was his friend and supporter. His children, Judy and Jack, both attorneys, were his pride and joy. And his grandson, of course, was the delight of his last years.

Most of all, I remember Al Rubinstein as a decent and good man. There aren't ever enough of that kind. I shall miss him greatly.

Margot Seitelman

A Question of Taste

WE are pleased to present *Bulletin* readers with the rare opportunity to compare their classical musical tastes directly with the music listening preferences of those who spend their professional lives actually *playing* the music on those records of which we are so fond.

For the past several months we have worked up a questionnaire to survey the music listening preferences of symphony players, and we have approached a dozen or so organizations for permission to distribute these forms. We have enough acceptances at this point (the end of April) to entertain hopes of obtaining a statistically significant result.

But rather than simply publish the results of our musician's survey, which in itself is sure to prove fascinating to many people in many quarters, it has occurred to us to go further and to actually test the thesis that intellectually-oriented people have *intrinsically different musical tastes* than artistically-oriented people. (We will save the implications of this matter regarding the bicameral brain for another day.)

To do this, we will need to survey our *Bulletin* readership as well. Therefore we present herewith the exact same questionnaire which has been sent out to the participating musical organizations, and ask for your kind participation. We sincerely hope you will take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire and mail it to the address given. If enough *Bulletin* responses are received by *July 31st*, we can perhaps follow our September column on the results of the musicians' survey with an October column on the results of the *Bulletin* survey.

The validity of the results, needless to say, depends upon the good reader resisting the urge to put down any information out of a feeling of what ought to be rather than what actually is.

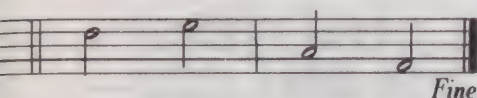
If you play an instrument, we would like to know this as well. As regards the "KEY," items 1 and 2 may be viewed essentially as an extension of the old debate between absolutist and romantic views of music. We hope you enjoy the experience, and that perhaps you will come out of it knowing yourselves a little better.



KEY

1. appreciation of *music* as an entity in itself, expressing its own universal principles which are apart from the human condition.
3. delight in the music itself; beautifully made; of such objective beauty or delicacy as to arouse delight (exquisite).
5.
 - A. response is primarily to the working-out of the formalistic process.
 - B. formalistic and melodic contents are too integrated to separate.
7.
 - A. elegant and emotionally uncomplicated.
 - B. refreshing; restoring; producing a sense of well-being.
 - C. exaggeratedly emotional/sentimental/sensational.
 - D. exasperating; low tolerance for the work.
 - E. relate little to the work/to its use of musical material.
 - F. psychologically unhealthy; morbidly preoccupied.
9.
 - A. classic, of lasting significance and recognized worth, in accord with established principles, authoritative, orthodox.
 - B. musical materials and usage are familiar, recognized, natural, comfortable, proven, traditional, conventional.

Please mail questionnaire
(or a photo copy) to:
Howard H. Ramsay
The World of Music Survey
P.O. Box 21567
Philadelphia, PA 19131



2. appreciation of *music* as an acoustic medium through which human perception and emotion is explored.

4. stimulates mental images or concepts which are not real or not present (imagination); mental invention; fantasy; reverie.

6. A. response is primarily to the melodic/counter melodic/harmonic content.
B. formalistic and melodic contents are too integrated to separate.

8. A. keen or piercing emotional appeal (poignant).
B. profound emotional effect (moving).
C. sense of pathos (touching); tenderness/sympathy/sorrow.
D. yearning.
E. dear to the heart.
F. soothing; tranquil; solace.
G. adventurous; exciting.
H. pensive; deep thought.
I. rapture; ecstasy.

10. A. new; experimental.
B. musical materials and usage extend, expand, stretch, advance, extrapolate, project, evolve.

1. Please list here the recorded musical works that you play most frequently for listening pleasure (limited to serious Western music; use additional paper if necessary).

Your primary instrument: _____

2. Opposite each listed work, please enter from the attached KEY the numbers/letters of any of the statements that closely match your most prominent responses to the work.

3. Please indicate the *strength* of your response to each of the works given below, according to the following scale (-5 to +5):

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
increasingly unfavorable			no response		increasingly favorable					

3. 4. Please enter the numbers/letters from the KEY of any of the statements that closely match your most prominent responses to the work.

Bartok:	Concerto for Orchestra		
Beethoven:	Symphony No. 6, "Pastoral"		
	Symphony No. 7, 2nd Movement		
Borodin:	Dances of the Polovetski Maidens		
Brahms:	Symphony No. 3, 3rd Movement		
Copland:	Appalachian Spring		
Debussy:	Three Nocturnes (Nuages, etc.)		
Delius:	Brigg Fair		
Dvorak:	Symphony, "From the New World"		
Grieg:	Symphonic Dances, Op. 64		
Liszt:	Les Preludes		
Moussorgsky:	A Night On Bald Mountain		
Mozart:	Symphony No. 36 in C maj., "Linz"		
	Overture to "The Magic Flute"		
Rachmaninoff:	Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor		
Ravel:	Daphne et Chloe, Suite No. 2		
Rimsky-Korsakoff:	Scheherezade		
	Russian Easter Overture		
Schoenberg:	Variations for Orchestra, Op. 31		
Stravinsky:	Le Sacre du Printemps		
Tschaikovsky:	Francesca da Rimini		
	Romeo et Juliet		

RG listings, up to 300 characters, will be printed (as provided by local groups) for five issues previous to RG. For earlier issues, only date and address of contact person will be printed. Send RG listings to Debby Greene, 12185 Dove Circle, Laurel, MD 20708, (301)953-3238.

JUNE 20 - 23

!AMERICAN MENSA'S SILVER ANNIVERSARY AG, Milwaukee, WI. Red Carpet Hotel & Convention Center. Come celebrate American Mensa's 25th anniversary with us. \$40 to 6/19; \$50 after; \$20 for youth (born after 6/20/67). SR \$45, DR/TR/QR \$55. Budget motel nearby. Contact: Registrar, P.O. Box 1114, Dept. BN, Milwaukee, WI 53201.

JUNE 28 - JULY 1

I Canadian AG, Ottawa. Think Tanks, Activities for children of all ages, guest speakers, fun, intellectual stimulation, socializing. Contact: P.O. Box 1054, Stittsville, Ontario KOA 3G0.

JULY 4 - 7

Orange Rush '85, Orange County, CA. Join us for 4 full days of frolicking, frivolities, festivities & fun at the Grand Hotel, Anaheim. Across street from Disneyland. Arpt shuttles & roommate matching services available. Seminars, workshops, games, prizes, dinner theatre, formal ball & Skyroom view of Disneyland's July 4th fireworks. Reg. \$40 to June 15, \$45 after. MP(6) \$79; (3) \$51; Dinner Theatre alone \$20. SR/DR \$50. Contact: Alice Buell, 11142 Brunswick Way, Santa Ana, CA 92705; (714)838-7114. S H Refund Policy.

JULY 9 - 11

North Coast Midsummer Madness IX, Cleveland, OH. See America's North Coast! Contests and prizes, square dancing, our annual SEXtathlon (with pea-shooting event), carnival, and a western banquet. All packed into the 1st and 2nd floors! Also, pool party and Jacuzzi-stuffing in our new larger quarters, the Harley Hotel of Cleveland South. Reg. \$27.50 to 7/18, \$30 after. MP(3) \$35. SR/QR \$42. Contact: Marty Matuson, Registrar, 14100 Arrowhead Trail, Middleburg Heights, OH 44130. S H Refund Policy.

AUGUST 2 - 4

High Mountain Mensa Mini RG, Buena Vista, CO. This is a camp-out Mini RG in the Colorado Rockies. Privies and firewood provided, but each camper must bring his own food, equipment and supplies. Warm clothing a must. Plan arrival Friday the 2nd, if possible; activities start early Saturday. Potluck BBQ Saturday evening, meat provided. Reg. None. Contact: King James Driver, P.O. Box 36, Eagle, CO 81631.

AUGUST 9 - 11

Wildwood Romp Mini RG, Vandalia, WV. Wildwood Romp & Vandalia's Cup Regatta at Buckskin Scout Camp, Pocahontas Co., WV. Slightly structured, personal participation — no lectures. Do-it-yourself in the mountains. Register \$5 + campsite or camper \$10; 24 cabin bunks @ \$20 (all weekend) — Reserved at payment. No meal package. Contact: Registrar, P.O. Box 489, Charleston, WV 25322-0489.

AUGUST 16 - 18

Huntsville RG, Huntsville, AL.

Circle City RG, Indianapolis, IN. Tropical Fantasy Ball, swimming, video, hospitality, speakers. Hilton Hotel, Monument Circle, (317) 635-2000. Reg. \$20 until 7/15, \$25 after, \$30 walk-in. MP(2). Contact: Sandy Althouse, 8166 McFarland Rd., Indianapolis, IN 46227; (317)882-5889. S H Refund Policy

AUGUST 30 - SEP. 1

Asilomar XXI RG, San Francisco, CA.

AUGUST 30 - SEP. 2

Rivers 3 RG, Pittsburgh, PA.

SEPTEMBER 27 - 29

Peachtreat! RG, Atlanta, GA.

Maryland Mensa RG, Baltimore, MD.

Saturday Night in Toledo, Ohio III RG, Maumee Valley Mensa. Fantasy costume ball, late night pool party, movies, animals from the zoo, biofeed-back, hypnosis, metaphysics, B & D, flight of Apollo 11 and lots more! A fantastic hospitality spread that will set the scene for animated and intimate conversation. All-you-can-eat meals. Toledo will never be the same! Reg. \$25 until 8/31, \$30 until 9/26, \$35 at door, \$20 young Ms under 18. MP(3) \$21. SR \$37 DR \$44. Contact: Frank Franklin, Registrar, P.O. Box 595, Toledo, OH 43693-0595; (419) 244-4201.

OCTOBER 17 - 19

East Central Ohio Mensa RG

OCTOBER 18 - 20

MensaAutumn '85, Connecticut & Western Massachusetts.

3rd Annual Mini RG on Cape Ann, Boston Mensa, Yarmouth, MA. No meals.

OCTOBER 25 - 27

DiVertiMento V RG, Delaware Valley Mensa, Philadelphia, PA. Delaware Valley Mensa hosts yet another great gathering in the heart of the city at the Philadelphia Centre Hotel. Workshops, lectures, games, SIGs, hospitality (of course), Hallowe'en party, dancing, tours, meal plan, fun. Reg. \$20 till 7/1, \$25 till 9/15, \$30 after. SR \$52, DR \$59. New direct access from trains, airport, bus. Contact: Carol Gomez, 4663 Oakland, Philadelphia, PA 19124.

Hallowee-M RG, Chicago, IL.

NOVEMBER 1 - 3

Gold Country RG, Sacramento, CA.

FloRange RG, Broward County Mensa.

NOVEMBER 28 - DEC. 1

5th Semi-Annual New England Pilgrimage RG, Boston, MA.

NOVEMBER 29 - DEC. 1

Phoenix, Phiesta Sephen, Phoenix, AZ. Contact: Cindy Cielle, 3115 E. Mulberry Dr., Phoenix, AZ 85016.

Sexyg National Gathering, San Francisco, CA.

North Texas Mensa RG, Dallas, TX.

Chattanooga RG, Chattanooga, TN.

DECEMBER 6 - 8

Zinzinnati RG, Cincinnati, OH. Contact: Melinda Wakefield, Registrar, 3820 Broadview Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45208.

1986

JANUARY 31 - FEB. 2

Groundhog GaAla III RG, Columbus, GA.

FEBRUARY 14 - 16

Heart of Florida RG, Orlando, FL.

FEBRUARY 28 - MAR. 2

Owlabama Blast RG, Central Alabama Mensa, Birmingham, AL.

MARCH 14 - 16

Derbytown RG, Louisville, KY.

MAY 2 - 4

SEMMantics VIII RG, Southeast Michigan Mensa.

MAY 23 - 26

Shenanigans '86, Northern New Jersey Mensa.

AUGUST 1 - 3

Salt Lake City RG, Syracuse, NY.

AUGUST 22 - 24

Milwaukee RG, Mensa of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, WI.

SEPTEMBER 19 - 21

Land O' Lakes RG, Minnesota Mensa.

OCTOBER 31 - NOV. 2

FloRange RG, Broward County Mensa.

* AMC Meeting
! Annual Gathering
IBD Meeting

I Out-of-country Event
H Access for the Handicapped
S Smoking Facilities

Reg. Registration
MP Meal Package (no. of meals)
SR Single Room

DR Double Room
TR Triple Room
QR Quadruple Room



MENSA JOURNAL International

NUMBER 287
JUNE 1985

Advertising copy deadline
is six weeks prior to
issue month.

The Journal offers an opportunity for you to share your experiences and opinions with fellow Mensans around the world. If you have something to say which is likely to be of international, rather than purely local, interest then please send your letter or article to David Tebbutt at 18 Courtlands Close, Ruislip, Middlesex, HA4 8AX, UK.

INTERNEXUS

Internexus is a column through which Mensans can create networks with like-minded individuals around the world. If your local or national groups don't satisfy your precise needs — perhaps you have a pet project or interest you'd like to share — then tell us in 50 words or less. Until this gets out of control we shall use the IJ as the 'switchboard' for initial contacts. After that we'll think up some other approach. Please don't regard Internexus as a substitute for a paid advertisement, such contributions will not be published.

I am an energetic 18 year old in search of an interesting/challenging way of spending 15 months from July 1985 to September 1986 (or any part of that period) before attending Cambridge University to read Natural Sciences. All suggestions welcome.

Simon Ayrton, 7, Wentworth Close, Watford, Hertfordshire WD1 3LW, UK.

Psychology student, Mensan, is looking for people who have (personal or other) experience with multiple sclerosis/disseminated sclerosis/encephalitis disseminata.

Theo Bogels, Postbus 71, 6640 AB Beuningen, Holland.

I would like to correspond with Mensans living in China/Japan etc. of any age, sex, profession etc. with a view to eventual travel to these countries. I am female, aged 29, have worked in the Civil Service (Science and office) as well as nannying and being unemployed. I am interested in literature (fiction and non fiction), science (for the layman — astronomy, physics), horse riding and walking.

E.M. Scott-Davies, 36 Butterworth Path, Luton, Bedfordshire, England.

I am British, 29 years old, breaking away from the tedium of a sales career and moving to Cape Town until October 1985. Whilst enjoying the South African scenery I hope to do charity/voluntary service and possible some casual or entrepreneurial work to supplement my budget. I would welcome contact with Afrikaansers, other expatriates or correspondents interested in dialogue, friendship, social drinking, swapping jokes and self employment.

Neil Carroll, 18 Lansdown Road, Claremont, republic of South Africa.

As a student researching Metaphysical art, particularly the artist Giorgio de Chirico, I would be grateful for any information/suggested reference material. I would also like to hear from people who knew him or know his living relatives. I travelled to Italy last year and am prepared to repeat this.

Patrick Lee, 14 Ramillies Road, Sidcup, Kent, DA15 9HY, UK.

Can anyone help me contact the International Society of Cryptozoology. Two letters to their mailing address (PO Box 43070, Tucson, AZ 85733) have produced no results.

R. Michael Luciano, 64 Center Street, Clifton, NJ 07011, USA.

I would like to make contact with any Mensans who are interested in American Indian ethnology and in particular anyone associated with the A I M or the B I A. Any information whatsoever on this subject would be greatly appreciated.

Martin I. Haywood, 109 Beaumont Road, St Judes, Plymouth, Devon, UK.

Electronic organ teacher/writer seeks organ nuts throughout the world for exchange of views/ideas/music etc. I would especially like to hear from Mensans whose musical culture is different from mine, but welcome hearing from anyone interested in electronic keyboards.

Janet Thomas, 48 Nutfield Road, Coulsdon, Surrey, CR3 3JN, UK.

I am interested in fish farming and aquaculture. I would like to correspond with professionals in this industry involved in shrimp, seafish and freshwater fish farming, for exchange of information and collaboration.

Dr. Howard T. Dryden, 1 St Leonards Street, Edinburgh, EH7 5RN, Scotland, UK.

I am interested in contacting any Mensans anywhere who share my interest in flying. Any communication on this subject would be appreciated especially suggestions as to how to obtain a PPL as inexpensively as possible. Who knows, perhaps there is enough interest for a SIG.

Mark Nicholson, Ingress Villas, 3 London Road, Greenhithe, Nr Dartford, Kent DA9 9EQ, UK.

CHALLENGING REPLIES

Richard Crawford's idea (MJJ, April) is fine, but one must bear in mind that no matter what social solutions Mensans can come up with, there is always the question of who will be able to put these measures into practice? It is like talent: no matter how talented an individual, unless someone somewhere decides to use that talent, he must just as well be a village idiot. There is always to be SOMEONE who has the authority to employ talented people or put

into practice socially advanced ideas.

Once we have found such an outlet, then — and only then — will the exercise be worthwhile; otherwise, even the greatest schemes have no change of seeing the light of day, and trying to devise such schemes, however plausible, would be a waste of time. Possibly not a complete waste of time, but a waste of time nevertheless!

Stewart Quentin Holmes, 117 Chiltern Court, Baker Street, London NW1 5SN, England.

The hope is that the doers among us might be inspired to act — Ed.

In answer to "CRAWFORD'S CHALLENGE": You're right, we could do many things, for the human being.

The question is, are we really willing to do so? I suggest we establish an unpolitical party, called the "HUMAN PARTY".

In a world like ours, we first should give the option to very human being, and I mean every human being without exception, to survive in his world. That means that we must teach ourselves and all the people that the only way for living in peace and security is to respect others.

Respect in this case goes so far, that we teach our neighbour, when he needs it, to fish fishes, not give him the fish.

I think, we Mensans could begin to establish objectives where we could help. Your decision is the beginning. Those who are willing to do so, might contact me, in Spanish, German or English, giving ideas and possibilities. And don't forget, every thought is impossible so long as we don't try to demonstrate a possibility of success.

Claus-Peter Eccius, Pflistergaessle 6-A, 7809 Denzlingen, West Germany.

PRO-POSITIVISM

I would like to reply, as basically a man of science, to Phill Everson's letter in the April newsletter where he discusses the 'problem' of positivism.

It seems quite clearly to be another case of the arts versus the sciences. For the past few years many people of artistic backgrounds have profounded the theory that those who study the sciences have a narrow outlook. However, it is the reverse which is true. My knowledge of the arts, I admit, is limited. Nevertheless I am able to distinguish between most classical composers, have a reasonable knowledge of history and can appreciate many other forms of art. However, how many of you with a predominantly arts education understand ohms law (let alone Maxwell or Gauss's theorems), have a knowledge of the fundamental laws of mechanics or know what atomic valency is. These are as fundamental to science as Constable, Bach, Schubert or Richard III are to the arts.

I agree, many artists among you may have a knowledge or even a good understanding of the

above mentioned fundamentals of science, but almost certainly far fewer than the number of scientists who would have at least a basic appreciation of the arts.

G. Monkman, 79 Main Street, Hutton Cranswick, Driffield, East Yorks, YO25 9QN, UK.

Phill Everson worries about scientists lacking in arts qualifications. I find far more worrying the fact that most decisions that affect people are made by persons completely ignorant in even basic scientific knowledge and principles.

Many of these people, highly able in their field, are so impractical that even simple household repairs are beyond them. It is often impossible to discuss simple problems since the language of science is meaningless in their world.

Many such people take a strong interest in animal welfare, ecology, nuclear power etc. and yet when questioned do not even know the basic facts of their subject.

Many scientists take a great pride in their subject and like many specialists may be narrow in their outlook. However so also are many non-scientists particularly in fields where mathematical rigour is omitted. It is often possible to expound deep theoretical ideas that fall to pieces when put to factual test and accurate calculation.

I find somewhat circular the argument that one should not use scientific principles to study problems. Solutions have been found to many problems thought to be insoluble in the past. Also rigorous proofs have been given that some problems have no solution.

The eclectic approach is based on subjective ideas of what is right or wrong in the world. Whilst it may make life very comfortable it does little to indicate which problems are real and which imaginary.

Phill Everson, like so many, seems to confuse scientific method and technology. Subjects such as music become far more interesting and understandable when studied in precise scientific terms than in the woolly terminology used by many musicians.

He overestimates the penetration of science in our culture. Many people glibly use the words but few understand them. Far too many are guided by blind emotion rather than logical thought.

There seem to be many also who prefer it that way. It is far more easy to use emotional arguments if the listener has not learnt to think.

R.G. Silson, Near Station, Tring, Herts., UK.

WHY

I think not only of Earth at all,
Not of cold numbers or candid verse:
But of the potential that man and Hal
Built for exploring the Universe.

Why then fight over your neighbor's Faith,
His ideology, culture, hair,
If we humans are all one race
And now there is no much to share?

There's the Solar System, the Milky Way,
Billions of Galaxies, one God to find:
If man is wise to keep away

SIMPLISTA ECONOMICA

Why do the golden ages of empires past so often coincide with periods of intense military activity?

Why does a nation with no great abundance of natural resources such as Japan prosper, while nations extravagantly endowed endure recessions?

How does a nation proceed from an essentially agricultural state with each farmer feeding perhaps 1.5 persons, to a heavily industrialised condition where each farmer feeds perhaps 100 other individuals?

Does it make sense for a nation to borrow externally when it has the unlimited borrowing potential of its own central bank?

Why is the underpinning of long term mortgage markets through outright government purchase of 25 year home mortgages acceptable in one decade and not in another?

Do lending and borrowing transactions affect supply, demand and prices in a way of their own?

How do changes in government stockpiles of copper, cheese, mortgages and gold affect the prices of these commodities?

Could it be that if the government spends more tomorrow, more citizens will go to work tomorrow?

Could it be that the import/export aspect of a nation's economy is essentially nothing at all?

Could it be that the most important aspect of a great nation is the number of people it sets to work?

Could it be that nation after all is not a business but a framework for their support?

The economy of any given country is more easily understood if divided into the following parts:

1) Fiscal Policy:- A virtual one-to-one correlation exists between government spending and employment levels. Increases in spending levels creates jobs and decreases in government spending eliminates them. There is also a one-to-one relationship between government spending and taxation. A balance of opinion tends to establish between the need for more employment on one hand and the perceived need for lower taxation on the other. Elected representatives are usually caught in the middle between the uproar for each side. Perversely spending tends to reach its peaks during or in anticipation of war. Spending likewise tends to reach its lows during periods of relative peace and calm once the population has the opportunity to vote for lower taxes.

2) Monetary Policy:- Interest rates, inflation rates and rate of erosion of the national

currency are the 3 main parts. A one-to-one-to-one correlation tends to establish itself over long periods of time in the long term statistical averages. Interest rates are essentially 'set' or 'administered' through a country's central bank. As a rule of thumb a country with low interest rates attains low inflation and a strong currency. A country with high interest rates attains high inflation rates and a currency which erodes rapidly. It is useful here to imagine the effects of sudden changes such as 100% increase in interest rates or a 50% drop. The availability of loans such as 75% or 90% of value as mortgages affects the value of commodities themselves. In this case land.

3) Trade Policy:- Here too a one-to-one correlation tends to establish itself in long term averages. When imports exceed exports or vice versa a temporary counter force eventually is produced in the markets for the nation's currency which brings back the balance.

4) Market Policy:- Prices are determined by supply and demand, interference by government decree with either supply or demand or price always results in distortions to the balance of the other parts of the economy. This can be especially subtle in the case of land which is generally valued in terms of the income it generates.

The foregoing notwithstanding, vast tracts of the population are busy and not very well informed on the economy as a whole. The media disseminates that higher interest rates will cause a stronger currency and very few have noticed that the end result is apt to be quite the opposite. Workers will vote for spending cutbacks with lower taxes firmly in mind. That elimination of their job follows, escapes them. Similarly the notion that much government spending is wasteful, is widespread. Yet the lesson that a huge portion of our GNP can be blown up, sunk or abandoned in WW2, is behind us. Hacks regularly worry that deficits mean higher interest rates when empirical studies indicate no correlation. Canadians have watched rent controls coincide with a slide in their currency, ignoring a virtual stampede of Canadian real estate investors to Miami Beach and other US locations. Worst of all they see no connection between high demand for apartments and stagnating values for their homes.

George Noviss, 129 Ennerdale Road, Apt. 3, Toronto, Ontario M6E 4C8, Canada.

DIVINE CREATIONISM

One or two readers got very touchy about the subject of Divine Creationism. Asterisks replace the words I prefer not to print in the Journal. It takes very little imagination to work out what they are.

Divine Creationism is pure ****. Why does the Journal even publish such excrement? If Mr. Colin Wood has spent many years researching this filth then he has wasted his life. Where does one research **** like this anyway? In latrine walls?

The evidence he gives is garbage. There are better explanations for man's seeming uprootedness.

If all that's required for explaining the origin or nature of man is a fantastic imagination,

From self-destruction as he goes by
The millenium of the "H" bomb
And is (equal) superior or alone...

PS. If inferior, get ready
For the past, fast
Unless we are the bad ones.

**Sec J.F. Abbott Galvao Jr.,
Ambassade du Bresil, Ulitza
Guertzena 54, Moscow, USSR.**

then I can give you a no less plausible one: There is no God and man has no origin. **Man** is eternal. How's that for brevity?

Guillermo Flores, Box 1041, Carrizo Springs, TX 78834, USA.

The education of the individual, and collectively, of society, has two indispensable elements. The first is the acquisition of tangible information and of the techniques for analysing and classifying it, so that it may be used successfully. The second is the identification and eradication of spurious notions, so that a clouded view of the world may be avoided. Spurious notions have become established through the acceptance of meaningless concepts, and through the irrational assignment of speculative causes to real effects. Theology provides the greatest concentration of these notions, so much so, that if they were all eradicated, then it is unlikely that there would be anything of theology left.

Divine Creationism, as put forward by M.P. O'Connor and Colin Wood, MJI No. 285 is just another batch of unfounded speculations, and there is no place for it in an educated society.

Alan Kent, 17 Red Hill, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY8 1NA, UK.

I would like to comment on M.P. O'Connor's article in April 1985 *Mensa Journal International*, as follows.

To my mind, the likenesses between humans and other forms of life on Earth are far more striking and profound than the differences, which are mainly of degree rather than kind. I instance the nucleated cellular structure based on a double helix of D.N.A. which is common, and which determines macroscopic characteristics. The factors, such as background radiation, which can cause changes to D.N.A. are adequate to explain the changes to the form we carry, if they are adequate to explain any evolution at all, surely, without postulating outside intervention.

However, if humans were an introduced species, there would be more plausible explanations for introduction than direct divine intervention, e.g. colonisation by a threatened species, or conservation by a higher one, etc.

The hypothetical reason for this does not ring true either. Where life is not cut short, mental processes tend to decline prior to death — e.g. senile dementia — so anything harvested there would have less than optimum quality. Anything living on the leftovers would be more of a carrion crow than a creator.

Finally, the hypothesis is incomplete, as it does not explain the universe, or the connection we have with it. If its only purpose were the stated one in the hypothesis, one could accuse the creator of gross inefficiency amounting to bungling.

These criticisms are made on the basis of the published summary only, and may not be fairly applicable to the idea system as a whole; but if the summary is at all good, I would say that the objections are equal to those which could be raised to more traditional creation ideas.

To allow a chance for revenge, as I believe a critic should, I append a summary of my own creation hypothesis. I have cast it in the form of blunt statements plus notes, to allow abbreviation if space limitations require.

1. Creation was of natural law only, a concept consisting of a complex arrangement

or modulation of a small amount of energy ... (note 1)

2. Acting on the energy of its being, natural law caused the formation of the universe as we see it... (note 2)

3. Acting on the universe, natural law brought forth life in infinite variety... (note 3)

4. The universe can be considered as the perfect work of art... (note 4)

5. The purpose of life is to interact with/ experience/appreciate the universe, i.e. to live... (note 5)

6. Death does not destroy life, it merely provides a boundary... (note 6)

7. I also note that (a) miracles are conceptually impossible, being admissions by the creator of failure and incompetence; they are also unnecessary, and (b) the goals of humanity should be the proliferation of life, and the enhancement of awareness and understanding... (note 7)

Needless to add, I am satisfied that all commonly held religions are bunkum.

NOTES

1. Natural law gives definition to time and potential, among other things which define the universe. But free energy existing as electromagnetic quanta has no extension in the time dimension, as relativity equations show. So, if it has a kinetic dimension at all, that dimension is outside the universe, consistent with the assumption of an external creator and an initial form consisting of energy.

2. Several stages in the process deserve mention. Falling through infinite potential, (dimensions being otherwise undefined) the initial energy produced mass by pair production. Once sufficient mass existed to provide a reference frame, momentum became defined, and further pair production occurred only in the presence of that mass. Space continued to fall in on itself, and the accretion of mass continued. It looks likely that at some stage a metastable single star formed, only to undergo catastrophic collapse, as a black hole, to form a universe. Such a collapse involves a great fall through potential, and consequent accretion of mass. It is probably impossible to determine whether our universe is the first so formed, or a daughter universe, but the latter is more likely, as there is no limit to the series. Such a universe initially gains mass and falls through potential; stabilises to approximate equilibrium; loses mass to black holes; when empty, rises to potential zero.

3. That no two lives can ever be exactly the same is a consequence of the uncertainty principle. This could indicate that variety is not the spice of life, but part of its purpose.

4. The actual purpose of the universe, if any, is probably beyond human knowledge, since how can we learn of its external environment, to find what function it performs there? But since art supposedly reflects the universe, it is obviously valid to consider the universe as a work of art, whether or not that is any part of its intention. So considered, the destructive and unpleasant side of the universe has meaning, as a necessary part of an infinitely harmonious whole. By analogy, a canvas is not a picture if it is all white light, or black darkness — there must be a skilful mingling of light and shade. Clapping hands requires two hands.

5. Thus all life achieves its purpose, as one would expect of a God's creation. As life apparently tends to evolve towards ever higher levels of awareness, it may be a goal of life as a

whole to achieve the highest possible level of knowledge and awareness of the universe and of itself. On this, a truth-seeking ethic could be based.

6. Because time exists only within the universe, the present, as we see it, is only a transient effect, which can be thought of as a wave-front of creation. It is not this which is brought into being — this is only the process. The now is only a transition point between the possible and the actual. It follows that death does nothing but apply the boundary to life in one particular direction, as the tip end does to a blade of grass. "Life after death" becomes an amusing misconception, although, if the wave analogy is good, it may be possible to detect in the now wavelets from past lives, or even backscatter from the future; but that may be stretching it a bit.

7. So it seems that conservationists and those who would colonise the planets both fight the good fight, and there are grounds for pursuing genetic experiments which might enhance human awareness, etc.

Michael F. Yonwin, 29 Leon Street, Thorneside, Queensland 4158, Australia.

NIGH ON MIDNIGHT

Harry Bergbauer (MJI 284) asks "why are we now being bombarded with claims that nuclear war between the super powers is imminent"? He concedes that "an exchange of strategic nuclear weapons would inevitably result in the destruction of mankind" but disputes the claim that "such war is imminent, and that it can be triggered by some otherwise inconsequential event."

He argues that one cannot "rationally accept" that claim because it would not be in the interest of self-preservation for the USA and USSR, and that their vital interests do not clash; they are said to have proved this by their avoidance of direct confrontation. Bergbauer concludes that "a nuclear exchange between the super powers is not only not imminent, it is not even likely" and that we ought to "cease... this rumour-mongering..." and "instead... debate the ways and means of maintaining the (present) delicate balance."

This letter reflects the complacent attitude that assumes that because something has not happened in the past it will never happen; or that low probability means it can not happen (some M's might be reminded of Fougasse's cartoons about famous last words). I associate the word 'imminent' with the scaring prospect that it might happen if we do not make the effort to stop it.

What sort of rationality have the super power shown by maintaining a balance at the expense of escalating armaments? It is a waste of resources they could apply more rationally to help the disadvantaged on their own and other countries (and justified by some American 'thinkers' as a means of wrecking the socialist economies and system!). Does escalation not create its own momentum towards the flashpoint; even if by itself it were to approach it only asymptotically, how can we 'rationally' exclude human error, as documented in many instances of false alarms, from the probability that it will never happen?

If one looks past the fancy names and acronyms, the present balance of ICBM's, MIRV's, MX's on land, sea and air, reaching up to the stars and beyond, looks frightfully unstable rather than delicate. It cries out for an active lobby to halt the race and to reduce nuclear and related arsenals, as promoted by numerous peace groups (e.g. for scientists by SANA in UK, Australia and New Zealand) with the support of millions across the world.

Or, to express it in mixed metaphors, rather than "si vis pacem, para bellum" (to live in peace prepare for war), put not your trust in princes. Let us turn our swords to ploughshares, and our armies into fire brigades.

Robert V. Horn, 35 Johnston Cr., Lane Cove NSW 2066, Australia.

INTERNATIONAL ELECTION

Congratulations and thanks from the President.

Under the Mensa International Constitution as revised in 1980 the four International Executive Officers are elected by world wide vote in June every second year. The second such election was due this year but has proved unnecessary because there is no contest. There is no contest because there is no disagreement, so what would have been a very

great expense for a world wide election is avoided.

The panel of candidates agreed among the National Representatives who met for the International Board Meeting in Kerkrade, Holland last Autumn has been returned unopposed.

So congratulations and thanks from the President are due. I congratulate, Hyman, Velma, David and Anne because they have their nominations have been accepted by Mensa and I thank them on my own behalf and that of all members for the voluntary work and responsibility they have accepted for the benefit of World Mensa.

May I tell you about them.

Hyman Brock who was and remains Mensa's International Chariman is the head of a large industrial group in Montreal, Canada and he appeared on the Mensa International scene as the Chairman of Canadian Mensa whose skill and tact took the heat out the International Mensa Constitutional wrangles at the beginning of the decade when he took the initiative which led to the Miami Pact.

Velma Jeremiah the present and new International Treasurer, is a long term Mensa stalwart from Portland, Oregon. Velma is a lawyer and served Mensa with wisdom and distinction as the universally trusted member who accepted my request to take on the tough and thankless slog of conducting the World Referendum which followed the Miami Pact.

David Schulman is a Dubliner and as a member of the British Mensa Committee the nearest thing to Brit on the new team. (The officers of the old IGC were mostly British and the recent way is a nice confirmation of Mensa's true internationality). David's experience as a highly successful business man well fits him for the task he has accepted, as International Director of Administration. He has the tricky problem of setting up and supervising the new International Office in Great Eastern Street, in central London which is now separate from the British office in Wolverhampton. The professional Executive Director there is Douglas Davies. David, as Chairman of Irish Mensa, which includes Ulster, has done a wonderful development job in the island.

Anne Snippe whose nomination as Director Development will be accepted, is from the Netherlands. (Anne is pronounced Au-neh, and is a man's name in Holland). He played a big part in the vividly successful international meeting and conference in Kerkrade and showed a flair for publicity which impressed the delegates.

It only remains to thank the outgoing incumbents Len Rickard, Nils Kleinan, and Katya Chestapalov for their voluntary service at the international level.

Victor Serebriakoff, President.

MENSA MONDIALE

Mensa Mondiale tells you about major activities and main points of contact in the Mensa world. If you wish to include details, please send them to MJJ, 18 Courtlands Close, Ruislip, Middlesex, HA4 8AX, UK.

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SIGHT: A world wide network of people willing to play host to travelling Mensans. Don't expect to stay more than one week. Please send international reply coupons or an American dollar bill if writing for information. And please tell Josephine where you're planning to travel and when otherwise she can't help you. Josephine Bacon, 2040 S Sprague Lane, T. Anaheim, CA 92802, USA. Hosts who receive unredeemable paper currency, send it to Josephine and she'll send real money in return (her other half a numismatist).

MEETINGS

June 20/23 USA, Milwaukee American Mensa AG in the Red Carpet Inn. Details: Registrar, PO Box 1114 Dept BN, Milwaukee, WI 53201 USA. **June 28/July 1 Canada, Ottawa** AG at Westin Hotel. Contact: Graham M. Stremes, 502 Bevan Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1Z 5S7 or Keldine Fitzgerald, Box 1054, Stittsville, Ontario, Canada K0A 3G0. **August 6/11 England, Cambridge** Mensa at Cambridge ('Inventing the Future'), Queens College, Cambridge University. Details: John McNulty, Oxhey Hall, Oxhey, Herts WD1 4NU, England. T. ((44)) (0923) 28466. **November 1-3 England, London** British Mensa AG. Details: Anne Nock, 20 Pasquier Road, London E17 6BH, England. T. ((44)) (1) 788 2564 (H). **November 23-30 Perth, Western Australia.** Arena '86 Conference on Leisure. Details: Paul Caston, PO Box 98, Inglewood, Western Australia 6502. T. (09) 457-4919. **June 20/23 1986 - Canda/Pacific Rim, Vancouver** AG to coincide with World Exposition (EXPO '86). Many hotels fully booked already! Details: Miss Sarah C.M. Hedges, Vancouver Mensa, PO Box 2264, Main Post Office, Vancouver, BC V6B 3W2, Canada.

ADVERTISEMENTS

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ONE IN A THOUSAND or think you might be? Send self addressed envelope to International Society for Philosophical Enquiry, Mrs. Donna Kopp, 5040 Cliffhaven Drive, Annandale, VA 22003, USA. **WHAT RELIGION REALLY IS;** things people mean by 'God': the explanation of Jonestown, Nazism; the authoritarian personality and the psychology of religion. Post-enlightenment ideology and the politics of the Roman Church are interwoven and brought to focus on liberation movements in MAN, GOD & STATE ISBN 0-920282-07-5. Send money order for \$25 US to: Athabasca Publishing, Box 396, Ft Vermilion, Canada T0H 1N0. (Foreign publishers also wanted). **TRIPLE NINE SOCIETY,** largest active group of its kind, welcomes those scoring at or above the 99.9th percentile. Journal published monthly. Send large SASE with information request and /or score report to: TRIPLE NINE SOCIETY, Membership Officer, PO Box 1111, Madisonville, KY 42431 USA. (Not Mensa affiliated).

INTERNATIONAL NOTICEBOARD

A mention in the diary cannot do justice to the international and national gatherings so we have created this noticeboard for brief announcements of major Mensa gatherings and other special notices. Please send details to David Tebbutt, 18 Courtlands Close, Ruislip, Middlesex, HA4 8AX, England.

MESS

I intend to start an English speaking SIG to be called 'MESS' (Mensa English Speaking Section).

This would primarily be aimed at M's in Germany but we would welcome members from other European countries also.

We have the facility to print and distribute a regular newsletter and would welcome not only English speaking M's, but also other M's who do not have such a command of English but who wish to learn.

I will be looking after all correspondence and membership lists and Julian Parr has offered to arrange copying and distribution of the

newsletter/announcements. So far we have approx. 24 people who would be willing to join such a group should it exist. So once we have it in the Journal then it's all systems go!

Mr. James W. Owen, AM Senft 2, 7515 Linkenheim-Hochstetten 2, West Germany.

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Texas — Permian Basin — Mike Craddock, P.O. Box 1084, Big Spring, TX 79720, 915/267-5268.

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Wisdom — (Expertise referral) J. Robin Christopher Reed, Box 1132, Douglas, AZ 85607-1132, 602/364-8737.
4th Estate — Tom Jermyn, #6 42nd Ave., Isle of Palms, SC 29451, 803/886-4157.

The March and September issues each carry a full reference list of local and national officers and editors. SIG coordinators, and state coordinators for gifted children. Interim updates are published as changes occur.

Notice: No endorsement by Mensa is intended or implied by the publication of any ad in the *Mensa Bulletin*.

The *Mensa Bulletin* does not knowingly accept ads which misrepresent the products or services being offered. Mensa assumes no responsibility for the contents of the ads or for the advertisers. Respondents are urged to exercise the same prudence as they would with any merchant or service organization. Each advertiser assumes full responsibility for his/her ad.

As a membership service, any complaint against an advertiser will be investigated in the interest of seeking a satisfactory and equitable resolution. All complaints should be addressed to the Business Manager.

Rates: \$1.00/word for members, \$1.50/word for non-members. \$10 minimum: \$15 minimum for non-members. \$5.00 for box number. Please include name, address, daytime phone number, and membership number for member rates. Checks payable to Mensa must accompany classified advertising copy.

Deadline: 8 weeks preceding first of month of issue.

All advertising copy should be typewritten, double-spaced, on 8½" x 11" paper. The ad department cannot accept responsibility for handwritten or hand-printed copy. Special symbols or characters should be avoided. All ads, with the exception of clearly designated RG ads, will be identified with name/address or *Mensa Bulletin* box number.

Acceptance of ads is on a space available basis. All advertising materials and copy are subject to approval or rejection by the Publisher. Advertisers may be required to substantiate value of services offered and may also be required to submit samples of merchandise for sale.

Ad placement will be determined by the Editor. All ads will be printed in upper and lower case, with introductory phrase in bold face. Capitals will be used only in specific conventions such as computer languages or trade names.

Box numbers: Advertisers are urged to indicate their general locale when a box number is used. Box number replies must be sent to the National Office in Brooklyn, NY and NOT to the Editor or Publisher. Those who respond to box number ads do so at their own risk.

Advertisers for PERSONALS, SITUATIONS WANTED, and Box numbers must be Mensa members in good standing. Other classifications are available to non-Ms, as are display advertisements; rates on request. Display ads for authorized Mensa gatherings are available at cost to local groups.

All communications regarding classified and display advertising in the *Mensa Bulletin* are to be addressed to Business Manager, *Mensa Bulletin*, 1701 W. 3rd St., Suite 1R, Brooklyn, NY 11223.

The following abbreviations are used when appropriate:

MM – Male Mensan
FM – Female Mensan
M – Mensan of either sex
S – non-Mensan

PERSONALS

Asian Sweethearts seek intelligent husbands. Box 928MB, Carmichael, CA 95609

FM, 39, tall with auburn hair, hour glass figure, seeks MM that is comfortable with who he is, is a realist but prefers to see the brighter side of life, enjoys the theatre, beach combing, flying and trying most things once. Northeast. Box 85-600 Bulletin.

MM, New York unencumbered Ph.D. academic, hiker and world traveler, visiting California occasionally, seeks Los Angeles FM nonsmoker, 36-48, with literary, artistic, or archaeological interests. Reasonably good looks and disposition preferred. Box 85-602 Bulletin.

MM claims women incapable of real friendship with men. Rebuttals? Box 85-603 Bulletin.

Attractive FM tall elegant photo-journalist multitallented ... loves sea, surfing, swimming. Seeks tall attractive adventurous mature MM. From NYC. Box 85-604 Bulletin.

FM, 33, tall, blue eyed, auburn-haired, Catholic, Republican, pro-space, non-smoker, loves books, animals, the outdoors and independence, seeks to correspond with single, like-minded Air Force pilot, late twenties through thirties. Box 85-605 Bulletin.

Wanted: Responsible, marriage and child oriented MM, 36+, by affectionate and attractive FM (5'5", 118 lbs.). Photo and phone please. Box 85-606 Bulletin.

If you continue to think like you have always thought, you'll continue to get what you have always got! Is It Enough? If not write Jackson, 5406 Plantation Dr., San Antonio, TX 78230.

Attention: Southern California MMs. Are you 28-38, tall, independent, secure in who you are? FM, 27, 5'7", slim. Self employed, enjoys motorcycles, dancing, music, exercise, computer games, stimulating conversation. Am a blend of the analytic and the outrageous. Let's share some adventures. K&M, Inc., P.O. Box 3449, Redondo Beach, CA 90277.

FM Psychologist, 36, NYC – Very attractive, lovely Irish eyes, 5'7", gentle, sensitive, romantic, honest, sane. Seeking very intelligent and affectionate, high-level professional MM, 36-46, for marriage. Box 85-607 Bulletin.

Dan McGlynn, erstwhile Mensan, or anyone knowing Dan, please contact: C. O. Ingamells, 3 Musgrove Ave., Kingston 10, Jamaica, W.I.

This Lone Ranger rides on Milwaukee AG, June 20-23! Might behave? Don W. Henderson, Lockney, Texas 79241. Cloud of dust, hardy ... Tallyho!

Hermann Hesse fans, don't we need our own SIG? John N. Landon, P.O. Box 672, Lancaster, CA 93534.

Sailing FM crewmate wanted for indefinite Caribbean cruising aboard 39' yacht. Please: literate, articulate, adventurous, curious, independent, unencumbered, moderately athletic, healthy, ungrouchy, 35-45. Leaving September. Taptich, 1077 E. Main, C-7, Conyers, GA 30207.

Science fiction writers: The N3F's 24th annual amateur SF and fantasy short contest closes December 1st. Send SASE for rules and blanks to Donald Franson, 6543 Babcock Ave., North Hollywood, CA 91606. Mention *Mensa Bulletin*.

Busy Prof. MM, 55, NYC, loves arts, healthful living. Seeks quality relationship. Box 85-608 Bulletin.

Handsome Author (MM, 6', fit) prefers slender, small town woman, 25-30, very pretty and well-bred but independent and perhaps with tomboy streak. Character & sense of humor important. I'm hard working; with diversified intellectual, artistic and business interests; athletically inclined. Bruce Price, #312, 325 West 45th St, New York, NY 10036.

MM, 28, 5'9", 150 lbs., attractive, successful, living in St. Louis, MO. Looking for fun, friendship, romance. Box 85-615 Bulletin.

MM Tall Fisherman: Middle-aged widower; nonsmoker; nondrinker, Work allows travel; seeks honest, easygoing FM for enduring relationship: Exploring, camping, Pritikin. Van Benten, P.O. Box 1015, Torrance, CA 90505.

Would anyone be interested in a SIG for right-brained individuals? Box 85-609 Bulletin.

FM, tall, slim, lovely, blonde, fit, frisky, affectionate, well-educated, sophisticated, 38. Seeks "over-qualified" MM to share the best life has to offer. Phoenix (but flexible!). Box 85-610 Bulletin.

In this world which is funny and sad, were you a loving husband and dad? Are you bowed but unbroken; has your life been a token – that you took the good with the bad? Said a pretty FM who is shy, if you're single, you're my kind of guy. With some verse 'neath a tree, a little Mozart, and me, you'll be glad that you dared to reply. Los Angeles area – Age 52. Box 85-612 Bulletin.

Ad SIG! Win friends objectively. \$1.00. Don Henderson, Lockney, Texas 79241.

Skinny MM, smoker, non-professional, single, mid-30s, not a dinky butt, desert loving. Interested in peace and conflict resolution. Any skinny FMs in America willing to consider a visit to my poor shack in Tucson? No Republicans please. Jake Elkins, 2730 N. Martin Ave., Tucson, AZ 85719.

FM, Widow, Ph.D., Independent, Multifaceted interests including music, art, theater, seeks MM in 50s or thereabouts, non-smoker, emotionally and financially secure, politically liberal, who thoroughly enjoys being alive. Friendship to start: future waters uncharted. New Jersey/New York City area. Box 85-611 Bulletin.

FM, 25, 5'5", computer professional from Silicon Valley, conservative, traditional moral values, cultural interests, seeks an educated, conservative partner with same values, similar interests, nonsmoker, non-divorced, non-partier, who enjoys family life. Box 85-614 Bulletin.

SERVICES OFFERED

Customized Humorous Verse – "Speech Starters" – From Your Data – Versifier, Box 429, Niceville, FL 32578 – 904/897-4958.

Investment System using common stocks has produced annualized average investment appreciation of 25% since 1974. Management fee low end of industry scale. Minimum investment \$20,000. Free brochure. Burney, 7416 Highland St., Springfield, VA 22150.

Worldwide Correspondents for language practice, cultural exchange. Rainbow Ridge, Box 1021EB, Honokaa, Hawaii 96727.

FM-Professional Word Processing. Manuscripts, résumés, papers, etc. Transcription, Disk Storage. SASE to 1231 Corte deCera, Chula Vista, CA 92010 for rates or call Lorraine Burke, 619-421-9426.

Need a new product? M-Inventor, excellent diversified track record, looking for challenging need in established market. Royalty compensation preferred. Don Christian, P.O. Box 5806, Spartanburg, SC 29304, 803/ 576-5711.

What is your preferred thinking style, left-brained or right? Complete a Hermann Brain Dominance questionnaire and send \$25 check. Individualized brain profile and interpretation done by a Mensan certified in the Hermann instrument. Workshops given in developing creative thinking. Dr. Dorothy Gilles, 701 Village Dr., Edwardsville, IL 62025, 618/288-3831.

You Are Probably Paying Too Much For Your Life Insurance. Lower Cost Or Increased Benefits Guaranteed. M-Licensed Insurance Counselor will analyze in-force policies on fee or commission basis. Call collect 313/353-6680. Bob Correa, CLU - 24151 Telegraph #280, Southfield, MI 48034.

Travel-Exclusive Mensa - Experience - discuss significance of Israel - religious, historic, political, economic, geographic. March 1986. Escorted by FM Travel Agent Bess Guptill - 110 16th Street, Suite 608, Denver, CO 80202. Call 800/645-0347.

University Degrees! Economical home study for Bachelor's, Master's, Doctorate. Prestigious faculty counsels for independent study and life experience credits. Free information - Richard Crews, M.D. (Harvard), President, Columbia Pacific University, 1415 Third St., Dept. 2E86, San Rafael, CA 94901; Toll Free: 800/227-0119; California: 800/ 552-5522; or 415/459-1650.

REAL ESTATE

Most Intelligent Investment in uncertain times: land, garden, energy-efficient house, with skilled knowledgeable neighbors, in stable rural setting. Investigate Ponderosa Village, Rt. 1, #17-5, Goldendale, WA 98620; 509/773-3902.

45 acre dry land farm near Cortez, Colorado, good for subdividing, electricity/water available, near new lake, view into Arizona and Utah, Richard F. White, MM, P.O. Box 1143, Kayenta, AZ 86033, 602/697-3415 before 2 PM MST.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Business Partnerships Offered. Mensan wishes to export European cars and needs U.S. import agents - Established or inexperienced. Call Terry Wall (U.K.) 2432 5205, or write Box 85-613 Bulletin.

PUBLICATIONS

136+ BIBLICAL CONTRADICTIONS, More! \$3.00, Crusade Publications, Box 200, Redmond, WA 98052.

MENSA, the lively 40-page professionally produced British Mensa Newsletter, carries Mensa news, puzzles, articles, and letters. For those visiting Britain, there is an address list and details of hundreds of meetings all over the country. For visitors to Britain, a single current copy will cost \$1 (seamail) or \$2 (airmail). For regular subscriptions, seamail \$8/\$14 (seamail, allow about 6 weeks to USA) or \$23/\$38 (airmail). Send orders with cash (pound or dollar notes) or cheques made out in pounds or dollars to Mensa, Bond House, St. John's Square, Wolverhampton WV2 4AH, UK.

Write, Publish and Sell Your Own Book! Free Information. SASE To: Ike & Dudatt, 9361 La Jolla, Huntington Beach, CA 92646.

Maybe it's not your fault you're fat. But you can lose it. Delicious low calorie recipes and a total health program. By Dr. Aubrey Pilgrim, 280 pp. \$6.95. Box 9364, San Jose, CA 95157.

THE VANISHING GODS, a history every Christian should read. Sold to Mensans with money back guarantee. For price, book review, etc., write to Books, 5313 Bakman Ave., Box 235, North Hollywood, CA 91601.

A DIFFERENT EASY WAY TO STOP SMOKING - \$4.00, Aronson, 7528 Canby Av, #204-Y, Reseda, CA 91335.

MERCHANDISE WANTED

MM seeks letters and other material written or signed by famous people in all fields, past and present. Top prices paid. Send photocopy or description for quote. Gary Grossman, 7 Dell Drive, East Rockaway, NY 11518.

MERCHANDISE FOR SALE

Gifts for all seasons for your favorite Mensans. A wide array of merchandise, including such practical items as T-shirts, plain and hooded sweat-shirts, running shorts, sunglasses, pens, scarves, note pads, as well as entertaining quiz and puzzle books, are available from the Mensa Boutique, 1701 West 3rd St., Brooklyn, NY 11223. Send SASE for free flyer and price list.

SOCIETIES

Classical Music Lovers' Exchange. Nationwide link between unattached music lovers. Write CMLE, P.O. Box 31, Pelham, NY 10803.

Discover Intertel - P.O. Box 15580, Lakewood, CO 80215. 303/234-0906. Not affiliated with Mensa.

Bertrand Russell Society. Information: M, RD 1, P.O. Box 409, Coopersburg, PA 18036.

Do you speak a foreign language? Come to multilingual soirées in Manhattan sponsored by The Language Exchange. 212/ 255-1096 eves. Box 85-405 Bulletin.

Single Booklovers for cultured singles of all ages. Nationwide. Established 1970. Write Box AE, Swarthmore, PA 19081, or call 215/566-2132.

The Letter Exchange - For essayists, poets, epistolary fanatics. Tired of "How's the weather?" letters? Send SASE: Letter Exchange, P.O. Box 6218M, Albany, CA 94706.

What To Do With A Higher IQ. Triple Nine Society, largest active group of its kind, welcomes those scoring at or above the 99.9th percentile. Journal published monthly. Sample qualifying scores: Stanford-Binet 148, CTMM 150, Cattel Verbal 173, SAT 1550, GRE 1500. Other tests accepted. Send large SASE with information request and/or score report: Triple Nine Society, Membership Officer, P.O. Box 1111, Madisonville, KY 42431. (Not Mensa affiliated.)

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Four weeks' notice is required

OLD ADDRESS:

Member No. (from label) _____
 Name _____
 Number/Street/Apt. _____

 City/State/ZIP _____
 Area code/Phone _____

If your change of address includes a change in ZIP, be sure to include your telephone number on the form.

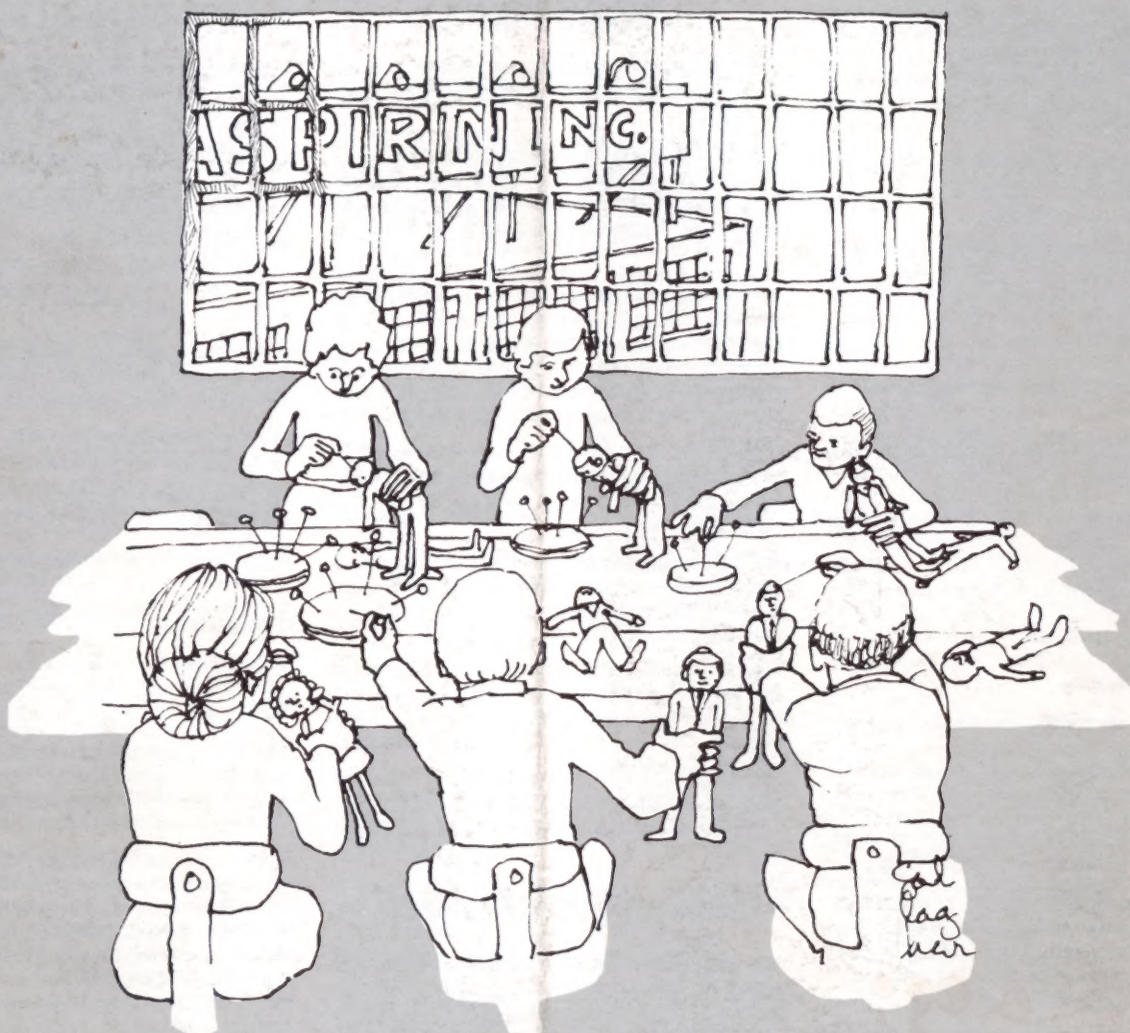
SHOULD BE CHANGED TO:

Name _____
 Number/Street/Apt. _____

 City/State/ZIP _____
 Area code/Phone _____

Current Mensa office held, if any _____

Send to: American Mensa, Ltd., Membership Department, 1701 West 3rd St., Brooklyn, NY 11223



MENSA is an international society in which the sole requirement for qualification for membership is a score at or above the 98th percentile on any of a number of standard IQ tests. Mensa is a non-profit organization whose main purpose is to serve as a means of communication and assembly for its members. Special Interest Groups within Mensa provide a basis for involvement in various activities and the sharing of opinions and ideas.

Qualification for membership may be determined by tests administered by Mensa or by submission of properly certified prior evidence. All inquiries should be addressed to:

American Mensa, Ltd.
1701 West 3rd Street,
Brooklyn, NY 11223.

Telephone answered 24 hours (718) 376-1925.
Office hours: 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM (Eastern time).

Postmaster — Send address changes to:
American Mensa, Ltd., Membership Department
1701 West 3rd Street, Brooklyn, NY 11223

